







# RENASCENT INDIA



# RENASCENT INDIA

BY

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MYLAPORE. MADRAS

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## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

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Sometime ago I laid aside pretty dreams and fancies and began to think of the live problems of my Motherland. While writing *Renascent India*, *The Next Rung* came bubbling up and covered the churn-pot with a thin layer of philosophic cream.

*Renascent India* and *The Next Rung* had a common birth and I left the twins in the same cradle putting but a thin screen of feather-weight paper between. Now the time has come for them to come out of the cradle and to go apart each on his own infant way in this crowded world. I have used the occasion to bless the elder with a parting gift, to dress him now in a few more clothes, all truly home-spun.

Kind reader, pray give him a nod of welcome and shelter for an hour if you happen to cross his infant way in the busy thoroughfares of men.

12th November 1929. } K. S. VENKATARAMANI.  
Mylapore, Madras. }





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## CHAPTER I.

### IN THE THROES OF A REBIRTH

THE Great War has plunged the world in the throes of a rebirth. There exists now throughout the East and West a definite unrest very intense and widespread. No forward movement has ever been so fully charged as now with the longing to realise some of the ideals of the race, as old as Buddha himself. This unrest preludes a basic change of values. It is not anarchical in purpose, unless human blindness makes it so. It is a leavening ferment. It is creative. It is the restlessness and activity of a growing spirit which seeks to widen its consciousness and emerge into a higher and fuller mode of life. It is a renaescent force fecund with a creative and motherly joy seeking for the peace and beauty of life in a new Religion and Philosophy of permanent values. The cream of twenty-five centuries of human endeavour waits to be gathered of this renaescent churn.

Science has been the changing factor of the century, the disturber of the molecules, precipitating a higher, more varied and perfect crystal-

line form. The rapid mastery which Science has given man over externals has left his inner nature more lonely and disconsolate, more divorced from Mother Earth and Her sweetness and realities. But material progress is only the scaffolding for the raising of a beautiful structure for the soul. So we are now yearning for a higher unity achieved not through political integration nor by a new kind of social co-operation nor out of a common cult of beauty, art and literature, but of a philosophic enquiry into the Oneness of all Life and the abiding verities of its love and sacredness in all its forms and relationship. The quest is not merely for a safe anchorage but for steady progress in all conditions of the storm-tossed sea of life. The search is for a base of action on impersonal grounds, for a Code of *Sanatana Dharma* drawn from permanent standards of value, which will help us to realise peacefully even in daily life both social happiness and Infinite Bliss.

The world is now surfeit of action for action's own sake, weary of mere strenuousness which refines and improves nobody. It is indeed strenuous action for over one hundred years that has upset the social order specially on its economic side. Therefore the economic causes induced by the marvellous progress of Science are the chief driving forces of this fresh un-

settlement. But these causes by themselves borrow their motives of action from a higher evolutionary urge in man, from deep, spiritual longings. The undying love of peace and harmony is there well-nourished in the very midst of conflict and is its own authentic proof of its ever-lasting value. For Peace is the very higher objective of War.

We are now only in the first stages of this renascent unrest. The Great War was but the first cloud-burst of the coming monsoon, mere thunder and lightning and tropical waste. In its full splendour, the effect of this Renaissance on creative achievement will be glorious. Its prophets will be different. Its voice will be new. Its literature will belong to another plane. Its songs will spring from new measures. Its rhythm, its ebb and flow will rise from the utmost depths. The sex-impulse now breeding men on low, competitive lines will be sublimated into a higher mode of consciousness and creation. Action will change from self to selfless, from passion to passionless, from exploitation to surrender and sacrifice, from property to humanity.

Social action will be selected and based on permanent values, not related to mere acquisition and material comfort but to cosmic peace and joy contributing both to individual happiness and common good. *Dharma* will be once

again established in harmony with the Time-Spirit comprehending in its newest and most complete form all races of men. A great epoch of fruitful endeavour awaits the human race in which well-used leisure and judicious activity will help us in ascending the next rung in the ladder of evolution.

This lofty purpose and moving vision inspire profoundly the Indian Renaissance itself and make it a vital and significant part in a kindred world movement of renewal. This spirit is now visible on the Indian horizon only as dark clouds of tempest, fleecy and unsteady, with the moan of a whirlwind born of strange seas, shy of land. But this is surely the monsoon month for India, and soon the sky will be overspread with rain-bearing clouds, and lightning and thunder will yield as if by magic to steady and fertilising showers. The conquest of Vayu by Varuna will soon be rich and complete, and once again the sovereign Love of God for men will triumph against doubts and difficulties and the spite of Evil.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHIRLWIND OR RAIN?

WILL it be whirlwind or rain? Such is the eager query of the thinker who reads the political sky, and watches with concern the gathering clouds on the horizon. For, the immediate future is full of peril to the human race. On every side, deep unrest is disturbing the security of old foundations and old ideals. Age-long political, cultural and spiritual values are being challenged. The economic and the colour conflict threatens to destroy our civilised life by its very primitive appeal to the sword on a colossal scale. The Seer sees already the thin ascent of rifle-smoke and hears the faint rumblings of gathering explosive forces, moving up slowly for the final catastrophe.

The Treaty of Versailles has proved to be but the beginning of another great conflict. For, the deep causes that engender war have been left untouched, and the affairs of the nations have been settled in the narrow and jubilant mood of one who holds all the trump cards in the play. The rivalry has been but driven



deeper. The defeated wait only for better luck in the next game of war.

So Europe is once again preparing for another great war with chaos in mind and despair at heart. It is being hatched with an air of solemn inevitableness in the heated nest of commercial greed and jealousy. In the forge of trade and industry you can fashion in essence only a sword and can never shape a simple, lovely life of peace and virtue. Divorced from Mother Earth and the open air of the farm, Europe leads to-day a poisoned life in a prison house. He who uses the false coins of exchange in the shape of manufactured goods in return for agricultural products is but a counterfeiter in the Kingdom of God, who knows not a day of security or an hour of peace and love.

I foretold in March, 1913, the Great War of 1914 in an article contributed to "East and West". With the same clearness I see the war-clouds now gathering scarcely a degree below the horizon of current international politics. The next great war will be a universal conflagration. Asia will perforce be jerked into it much more completely. It will then be a fight to the finish. Will humanity emerge the better for it? Will it be thrown only into a deeper welter of chaos and anarchy? The answer depends on the strength and attitude, the vision and the idealism, the compassion and the

humanity of India and China, and the United States of America and Great Britain.

Is it now impossible to save the world from the butchery of this lurid vision? Is it now too late? Perhaps not quite too late yet, but the work would be thrice harder, as the water-weed has now overspread the clear and flowing waters of life. At the time of the Treaty of Versailles, it would have been mere child's play to ensure love and peace to an aching and war-weary world. The human mind was ripe and ready for it. But Lloyd George and Clemenceau—the "Wizard" and the "Tiger"—were not children with the spontaneous love of the child for the true, the simple and the natural, but veteran politicians fed on their self-love and the dainty blood of the sheep. The atmosphere the world over was then for peace. But in the peace-chamber which witnessed the birth of the Treaty of Versailles, it was charged with the pride of triumph, the elation of victory and the gains of plunder. Wilson, the dreamy boy, was fooled for all his excellent Fourteen Points, and the victory both in War and in Peace was tragically complete for the next war.

It is not too late even now. But only the task of preventing the explosion will now be tremendously the more arduous. The only hope is in a coalition—cultural and spiritual—of India and China, and Great Britain and the United

States of America ; and perhaps Russia as well. India and China should league their forces against the array of war and in the name of Buddha and their own ancient culture should give the mandate of peace to the whole world. The United States of America is the most hopeful country in the West on the side of peace. America will listen to the authentic Buddhistic Voice of India and China, as she once listened with love and fascination to Swami Vivekananda's saintly voice. For her soul is not yet wholly lost in manufactured goods. The primitive peaceful instinct of the tiller of the soil has not yet wholly deserted her.

The real peace problem is Europe and it is economic at the root. Western Europe out of necessity for bread and butter, tea, coffee and sugar, is forced to disturb the peace of the world. Russia is sound with her plentiful wheat-fields and a simple peasant population. Western and Central Europe, efficient and organised, with coal and steel as the glittering coins of exchange, is the real trouble. Its unemployed surplus population swell the conscript armies, and their courage in war is really the courage of the man who fights for his food. The next war is well-nigh solved if some great *Avatar* or Teacher, a second Christ with a spiritual gospel well-laid in Economics, finds for the surplus population of Western and Central Europe, whom the pa-

triotic soil cannot support, a permanent agricultural home in the wheat and rice fields of the many open and fertile spots of the world.

The only one solution to all modern wars whose chief emotion is no more dynastic or religious, lies in Agriculture and Emigration. Then War will be deprived of its chief motive and emotional strength, hunger. National frontiers and patriotic shouts should cease, and an international outlook should be sedulously cultivated. It is the higher patriotism which feels that the human family is one, and one among many of God-created things.

India's duty to this grand human cause is clear. Spiritual and cultural emissaries from our land should go by ship-loads to Europe and America not to admire and copy the glory of their sky-scrapers but to tell of the God-head which they permanently hide from men's eyes. We should preach the common humanity of the whole world, chant the ancient Vedic hymn of the Oneness of all Life, and cry out from house-tops, "Go back to the plough for an honest life in the open farm, and wars will then disappear like darkness before the Sun".

The world-position is such to-day that mere electioneering adroitness or clever-speaking will never save the situation. Mere political sagacity or statesmanship that rides successfully the wind of the day only creates the whirlwind of

the morrow. A major operation of the eyes of our politicians and the heart of our statesmen is necessary, and God's surgical power alone can effect it. The scales that now screen the Vision Splendid of a simple natural life should fall, and the vile ambition to corner the false riches of the world in one person, place or country through the perilous medium of a cruelly efficient but false monetary system should no more corrupt the activity of a nation. A change of heart should take place. May the vision that reflects an architectonic mind conceiving the whole world as one family be vouchsafed to all, especially our leaders! A devotion to the cultural and spiritual values of life should permeate the masses, and guide and control the motives and deeds of statesmen. Then only we can successfully avoid the carnage of another great war.

Renascent India should avert this coming disaster by the wisdom and dignity, by the power of her united Voice. A new order of men should arise in the ranks of our public workers. Passionless, selfless, without the sense of possession, they should do their *Dharma* with the limpid conviction that peaceful and impersonal action alone will take man to the higher destiny that awaits him in evolution. India, the homeland of Buddha, Sankara and Ramanuja should beget, now or never, the Great Shepherd of

whom it could be said that He herded well the straying and scattered flocks of sheep in their hour of greatest peril ; wolves on one side, wolves in the skin of lambs on the other, and darkness falling thick all around, far and near.

### CHAPTER III.

## THE RENASCENT URGE

THE whole world is longing now not for political unity as a final step but as an aid towards the realisation of the Oneness of all Life. Renascent India is bound to help substantially in the fulfilment of this ancient reverie of the race. To the higher civilisation towards which we are all moving, India has a special message to give as the most faithful and persevering of the caravan which has kept the bright star of the Oneness of Life steadfastly in view even in the midst of great upheavals. It is in our own hands to speed up the caravan or become the worst stragglers impeding its march.

Everything depends on the proper direction we give to the new impulse, the vast creative force of the Renaissance, now overspreading the Indian sky like the majestically rolling monsoon clouds. It is the first drizzle just now ; all this fret, fever and unrest of the last three decades.

„But Fate has already found us only wasting in pathetic ignorance the precious spring water in the side-drains. Let us take the warning to

heart, and keep ready our fields, with the soil turned and manured. To the extent to which we build our Swaraj India on our genuine longings, on lines of the utmost freedom and equality to all, to that extent we shall fulfil ourselves.

A study of our ancient civilisation, as reflected in everyone of the present-day problems that face the worker in Indian politics, sociology and religion, is valuable for a proper understanding of the world problem. On their constructive solution rests our march to a higher civilisation as a whole.

For India is a sub-continent with one-fifth of the human race, comprising every stage of life. This unevenness of wide range is the result of many experiments in the Science of Life that have been going on peacefully with varying success in the Indian crucible for over three thousand years. China is as populous as India, but her life is quite even. She weaves only one pattern of God's mantle for all shoulders.

But India is a replica in miniature of the whole world, and as such affords good materials for the study of the larger problems, almost as if it were in a special laboratory. India is a microcosm of the hopes and troubles of the whole world itself. She has an ancient culture evolved by absorbed thinking and continuous experiments in the higher unknown. There is a large storehouse of traditions, helpful hints



in the many institutions which many movements have left in different stages of fulfilment or failure. India shows a correct and sensitive pulse disclosing to the specialist all the diseases of life. There is splendid material and atmosphere for critical study and creative evolution.

India has been faithfully experimenting from remote antiquity on these lines. She has always concentrated her mind on some of the first problems of life separating the essential from the accidental. She has eagerly sought for the grand truths both in busy life and in solitude. Her one great quest has been the ways and means to higher forms of peaceful life, ever eager to reduce the lower elements that resurge powerfully at every stroke of action that physical life needs for its subsistence. She has felt throughout and kept in view the divine urge. The Vedas and the Upanishads, the Gitas and the Puranas placed in the philosophic crucible always yield some definite principles of social action of permanent value in all changing circumstances and in all stages of an evolving society.

The manner of stating the truth in the sacred books is admirable. The conclusions only are there in the form of terse rules. There is no elaborate reasoning to obsess the mind of the reader and provoke him to counter-arguments which land him finally into the chaos of pole-

LIBRARY. All reasoning is but a partial statement of one's own rich and incommunicable experience. It varies with the individual. The ways to a peak are many. If the peak be made visible to the eyes, each knows from the level of his own emotional and spiritual experience, the nearest route to the radiant eminence silhouetted against the clouds.

India's variety is the guarantee of a final excellence which comprehends everything. She has given shelter and food to every culture, race, religion, and sectional interpretation of life. She has none the less achieved amidst these conflicting elements a wide cultural unity, an ethical synthesis of rules of conduct for all time, a *Sanatana Dharma*, a code basing action on impersonal motives and selfless principles.

India has achieved all this because of the excellence of her ancient political machinery and its relation to general life. The secret of this excellence lay in her political decentralisation and the minimum of government she had all along exercised. Her organisation was the least ; her administration the healthiest minimum. The citizens did not waste their lives in barren clerical work in the humid cells of the secretariat, but lived them in the open, in the most prayerful moods of philosophy and meditation. Politics, in India, was never played as a preliminary game for aggressive warfare or

as the hand-maid of trade. Politics faithfully served as the hedge that well protected the green acres of culture and religion.

The Indian system is worth an intimate and sympathetic study by all students of political science ; for, hints of the higher science and philosophy of Government it has in plenty to the observant thinker. India has a living cultural and spiritual tradition even in this mechanised age because of the strength of her decentralised and full life in the villages. Though one hundred years of a highly centralised government have now maimed the proper functioning, she has still preserved her culture, social structure and religion, ethics and philosophy, without the aid of violence or propaganda. Because of the exceedingly small measure of bondage or dependence her social and general life has on the government of the country, the best in India has never been political, which may be maimed or destroyed in the volcanic upheaval and sudden changes inevitable to all political life. Government has ever been to us a minor burden and a minor adventure.

Even to a casual observer it is evident that the whole world to-day suffers a great deal from excessive political action at every step leaving no energy or freedom for any kind of cultural or spiritual activity. To such a world, weary of politics, weary of elections, weary of war,

weary of wasteful work, India has a bright solution to offer, a full message to deliver, a rest from all fret and fever of action, from overwork with which Europe and America are now over-saturating their civilisation, and poisoning their free lives.

Renascent India's message is a philosophy of productive rest and creative leisure. Is not such a full-throated song worth a patient hearing? Will the West, with its "superiority complex," with its strident racial pride, care to listen to the song of Peace which India has ever been fluting since the dawn of civilisation? But this message India can and will deliver in full only in the renascent atmosphere of freedom. It is the primary duty of Great Britain and the first obligation of its trust, and it is also part of the world's work for its own sake, to help India to win her freedom both individually and collectively and set her quickly on the road to liberty.

A captive bird in the cage, will it ever sing its sweetest songs in its gloomy cell, when the leafy branches wave their welcome before its very eyes and the sun rides in splendour across the blue vault of the sky?

## CHAPTER IV.

### CREATIVE UNREST

THE soul in travail of a subject nation expectant with freedom is psychologically the most difficult to analyse. India is now in a state of unique unrest, for within the last one hundred years everyone of her cherished ideals, political, social, cultural and spiritual has been thrown into the melting-pot. All values are being inverted and tradition ignored. The least by which she has lived, political values, are now being made the most of, absorbing the entire energy of the nation. The most for which she has lived, religion, duty and good conduct are relegated as optional luxuries indulged in during idle hours of meditation or emotional exuberance. Minimum government has given place to maximum. Individual freedom to perfect and prune oneself has been overshadowed by a gospel of collective service to humanity carried on in the wage-earning spirit; the more exploiting and wasteful the office, the bigger the salary attached to it. A rampant materialism nourished by a logical and scientific rationalism is sapping the strength of our cultural and spiritual ideals.

This twist to the straight growth of centuries has naturally sent a shiver of pain along the spinal cord of the nation. Even this sudden shock carries with it an evolutionary urge, some amount of useful cerebration. Under the impact of these new forces, India is moving quickly to a great Renaissance, likely to prove one of the most eventful if prudent and timely use be made of it before the tide begins to ebb as it often does suddenly in our life and history.

An Indian Renaissance means not merely a great boon to India. It is a real enrichment and service to the world. It has never been a mere feathering of our own nests. We have no lands to annex but the empire of men's mind; no markets to corner or control but the pilgrim places of culture all over. But the period of this renascent activity is always a delicate and anxious one. The greatest care is needed to guide it safely along the rapids of a bubbling and joyous new life. And it lessens the presence of mind and adds to the tremor of hands to know that the frail bark is laden with gold-dust.

But the signs are hopeful. Because the younger generation of Indians are learning that all ideals, songs and dreams have their worth only in the measure of their transmutation into deeds and habits of action. The gift of vision, the usual, floating, mystic idealism comes easily.

to the Indian, and the younger generation have shown proofs of an earnest desire to turn the ideals into racy and indigenous deeds. It is all the more remarkable that this good work is being done quietly with bitterness towards none, without advertisement, without a sense of possession, exploitation or victory, without even the common desire to commercialise a chance good deed.

But this rich work charged with idealism still floats like cream only on the surface, and touches but a choice few with the joy and dignity of a new love and the faith and inspiration of a new labour. When this spirit permeates the whole nation and the ripening becomes full, the fruit-gathering will be by basketfuls everywhere in Science, Literature, Arts and Religion. The depth of the permeation will determine the extent of Renascent India's record of service at the shrine of humanity. There is prospect of excelling even Asoka's India, if only politicians, both white and brown, do not take an all too powerful command of, and wholly absorb the national energy in mere political work, even of rebuilding Swaraj India.

This beautiful vision of a full Indian life will materialise only if India gets the higher freedom to earmark and proportion her energy to the greater quests, true to her ancient national instincts. Otherwise the renascent cloud-

spread sky will scatter but scanty and capricious showers on an arid waste. The surest of India's national instinct whispers the great Secret into the ears of those who can hear: minimum time for political work and maximum time for cultural, scientific and philosophic inquiries. The slightest violation of this *Dharma*, as ancient as the Ganges and the Cauvery would lead to lasting injury, and one of the rarest and most fruitful moments of Indian history would be wasted for ever.

India had ever been till fifty years ago the least governed country in the world. Its greatest wars were never national. They were mere engagements, limited in number and poor in quality, waged between two isolated groups representing the wasteful, vagabondish and adventurous elements creating friction in society. They had never the sanction of our wisest men or the support of our ablest or most respected citizens. They were a kind of safety-valve which let out the stray, militant, uneducable and harmful forces of every generation. This is the correct reading of Indian history which reveals the only basis on which India could have found the time to evolve the grand cultural unity of centuries amidst so much of political breaks, violence and calamities. .

Life's highest achievements depend on the line of your own preferences. But only in one



line are you given to make your mark. You may combine your energies to bundle a nation into a great and powerful unity in only one way. Such is God's decree. If you make it political, it is only political. If you make it cultural, it is truly cultural. National energy is adequate to function in only one mode. Man is so made. India knows this great secret of the gods and prefers the cultural and the philosophic to the political. For it has ever rated government a minor, and to a considerable extent, an immoral adventure of man on this planet, however necessary the adventure may seem to be for the moment.

So there is an intimate connection between over-government and cultural deficiency. Political efficiency is the cheapest and the most attractive in immediate rewards, even as trade and shop-keeping are. But according to the higher values of evolution, administration is the most barren work. It is wasteful, artificial and unnatural. One man is never meant to rule another. It is an inversion. Like all inversions, it is exciting, seemingly good and joyous for the moment but never healthy, but terrible in reaction when the time comes for proper reckoning and assessment of the final values of a deed.

This great ideal of minimum administration and politics, and maximum leisure for good and

humane work, India has ever cherished with devotion and courage even amidst severe disasters. But the British Raj has centralised everything characteristically, and true to its own commercial bent of mind. Hence the intense suffering and unrest of India. There is a spiritual yearning to reorganise our Swaraj on our own ancient lines of maximum freedom from all governmental work, worry and interference. Till this higher freedom is gained, India will never be in a position to give out to the world her full-throated song of Peace, Love and Knowledge.

So India's cry for Swaraj is a longing for one of the greatest ideals of humanity, individual refinement and perfection resulting in the complete release of all need for any form of government. It is not a mere patriotic or sectional or even national cry. But it is part of an idealistic movement springing from a higher range of human emotions, which is bound to bring peace, love and rest to the whole world, and in particular to the over-worked, politically sweated and spiritually wasted West. It will refit and fertilise their wonderful energy, with a fruitful message and a calming idealism, and advance them to a higher plane of life.

India's cry for Swaraj is not for an Indian replica of the existing form of government, with an insatiable appetite for clerical work, pen,

paper and stationery which sweats the world of poor millions to nourish the vampire's life of a rich few. It is a Swaraj with a message of Plenty, Equality and Liberty, Minimum Government, Peace, Love, Rest and Harmony to the whole world, now sleepless and aching with over-work, hunger, blind repetition, pain and waste.

Will the great God help us in the real struggle against ignorance and misery on earth or prolong it wantonly for another cycle of suffering?

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TWIN CAUSES

THE Indian renascent movement springs from two powerful causes. An intense longing for freedom is urging the educated classes to gain for their Motherland a higher place in the comity of nations. And sheer hunger is goading the masses to deep discontent. Freedom riding on the crest of widespread poverty has ever been the most potent cause of political cyclones. Such conditions obtain to-day in India, and the prophet and the thinker watch their gathering strength, and wish to harness the force to the ultimate good of all.

The grand feeling for Liberty is always the precursor of a vital change in human affairs. It makes for a rich dream and interpretation of the life of the age. For Liberty carries within its bosom a pouch of musk—the philosophy of meditative leisure and creative repose. Freedom, till now bottled like perfume, for the benefit of a few, now seeks to escape into the air for the benefit of all. It is now richly spread in the Indian sky like the monsoon cloud. It is the product of the Time-Spirit. It cannot be

ignored. It cannot be crushed. By recognising this forceful creative movement in India the world stands only to gain.

The average Englishman and the urban Indian have no idea of the appalling poverty of the Indian village in which lie the roots of our life. I see with my own eyes every day hundreds of poor, ill-clad, famished and over-worked men. Ten per cent. are totally unemployed. Fifty per cent. live on one meal a day, no better than pigs in the sty, and twenty per cent. on bare two meals without any standard of comfort. This is due to the fact that the village produce, barely enough to keep alive its own present population, is drained largely to meet the exigencies of modern civilised life and Government. But the village has no power or facility to increase its agricultural production. The net result is widespread poverty, misery and discontent.

The political machine of the Government of India functions blindly. Its eyes are focussed wholly on the Army and the high-paid Services while they should be beneficently fixed on Agriculture, Land Tenure and Mass Education. Its axis is tilted in favour of sunlight to the urban areas, and darkness and death, and cold and hunger to the hundreds of villages. A Government of India functioning properly and being sensitive to the heart-beats of the dumb-

millions, can, as if by magic, in five years, the quinquennium of a Viceroy, double the village produce by scientific agriculture and lower the taxation on land and bring peace and plenty to all.

The immediate future of the renascent movement seems full of peril. Like unbanked waters, it threatens to eat the flats and the fields. Its handling requires insight and sympathy. The bare and brutal fact is that Hunger is driving to despair the masses. So, ordered Government, British or Indian, on the present lines will not stand the impact of hunger, for one more decade. As real Indian conditions are to-day, at least to sixty per cent. of the population ordered Government means only infinite toil and labour in the fields and in return only one meal a day. The tiller of the soil stands helpless but is slowly driven to feel that he would not be a loser by a change to anarchy and revolt, and would certainly be a great gainer if he loses in the fray the body that he cannot support in peace in spite of his infinite, patient labour.

Will both England and India rise equal to this great task of good for the Commonwealth and for the Commonweal of the world? Thinkers who have the vision have not the power. Statesmen who have the power have lost the vision. On the constitution which finally en-

visages the rulership and administration of India waits a great issue—the issue of the peace and happiness of one-fifth of the human race, perhaps world-peace as well. And the constitution should in the first place give the Indian village its ancient and vital place. The wealth in script in our banks is but mere token, and the real wealth of a nation is in its villages.

Hunger is the age-old cause of disorder even in the case of nations traditionally wedded to law and order. And in the case of India which has always preferred and preached individual freedom to organised life, hunger is the most potent cause of all the present unrest.

Hunger in the material plane and a passionate longing for freedom as a birth-right on the moral plane are the twin causes of the Indian renaissance movement. They are the two vital issues before India and England asking for immediate solution. The thinker sees it all. Will the statesmen in power see it in time ere the monsoon clouds change to fury, lightning and thunder that rend the sky and spread fire and destruction on earth?

## CHAPTER VI.

### FEDERAL OR UNITARY?

THE unitary type is an archaic survival. It is the product of troubled times when small clans had not coalesced into a nation. It was brought into being to serve a single end, to protect the State from civil disorder and foreign aggression. But modern civilisation has more complex ends in view. The aims and aspirations of public life are slowly becoming non-political and cultural. The unitary type which concentrates all power in one place or person for the sole purpose of protection will not suit the growing needs of modern life or the love of individual freedom which requires a full measure of decentralisation. The unitary type is the invention of a small and compact people. It is a virtuous invention in such a case as it then functions effectively to keep internal peace and order and secure equality and justice among its citizens. It is an enforced growth when a nation of moderate area and population is threatened by war on all its four sides by powerful and aggressive neighbours, on account of its geographical position. Or it is a profitable game of adventure when an insular and homo-



geneous nation assured of peace within and safety without, turns predatory, obliged to live on trade, commerce and industry, selling glass beads for shiploads of wheat, as the patriotic soil cannot lend itself to agriculture, and the citizens are unwilling to emigrate to places which produce food in plenty and share in the humble work in the fields.

These are the conditions under which unitary government thrives functioning solely for the purpose of protection for which it has been brought into being, atrophying every other faculty of the people. A nation under unitary government, even under the first category of very small nations, never finds it possible to lead a rich and full life. All national energy is concentrated and made to flow in a rut, the military and administrative rut.

Political consciousness transmutes to lead even stray particles of gold in national character. In such an atmosphere, culture, ethics, morality, religion, poetry, philosophy, music, everything slaves only to feed the political machine and fertilise the political consciousness, suffering a pitiful change in the process. This machine in turn always functions leading somehow to war, the moment surplus energy is stored. The executive of such a nation gets saturated in ideas of conquest. The air becomes heavy with the lust of power. Even the smoke

of gunpowder is fragrant incense to its dilated nose, nay the very oxygen on which it lives. The sleuth-hound does not get more excited to joy and speed at the scent of blood than a unitarily governed and highly centralised executive of a nation does at the prospect of war.

For, the cardinal feature of the unitary type is a remorseless centralisation of all powers. Even the remotest village with all its resources in men and money is held at the disposal of the central government. The unitary type is primarily designed to function effectively in times of peril. So it places concentrated power in the hands of a few. Power is an intoxicant which perverts even the finest mind. Democracy with its complex conditions and high ideals will never tolerate the unitary type in its primitive rigour even in countries where the circumstances are otherwise favourable. India with one-fifth of the human race, with a civilisation ancient and coeval with the very emergence of man, with a philosophy and religion nobly wedded to peace and non-violence, would stoutly refuse the soul-bondage of a unitary government.

Renascent India would reject without hesitation a highly centralised and unitary type. She needs the largest measure of decentralisation and freedom to continue her cultural and spiritual work. No doubt India requires a strong

central government but not a centralised\* government in which all the threads of our national life are held in the damp and perspiring hands of one. She needs a strong federal government to guide her three hundred and twenty millions of infinite variety, to secure the liberty for each province, however small, to work out its own embroidered pattern of life. But it must be a strength derived not from sedition laws and fiscal enactments that bring in a revenue of many crores on which a huge army may be nourished and kept ready. It must be a federal government which derives its power and authority from the saintly eminence of its constituent members, from the moral excellence of its regime, the justice of its policy and the humanity of its administration. It must be a strength springing from within and not loaded from without.

Indian history is witness to this grand ideal. The short-lived unitary form of liberal government of even Asoka and Akbar, two really great men who would get into any list of the twelve greatest men of the world, failed in the end in spite of their acknowledged humanity, power, wisdom and benevolence. Why? Because it was opposed to the genius of India. It was a denial of the cultural message and fundamental aim of an ancient nation. Government is a slender rope bridge across the deep and turbid

river of collective life, not a rope-bag of bondage to gather therein the dried leaves and twigs.

Anyone who has set foot on this ancient land of Bharatavarsha owes homage and allegiance to this spiritual ideal. Even the highly different and exclusive Muslims have felt this magic power. The Indian Muslim, saturated in the mystic ideals of India for over ten centuries, will nobly lead in due time the whole of Pan-Islam, to the Promised Land of Peace, and place the splendid Pan-Islam block to raise the lovely structure of universal humanity.

The communal trouble that is now darkening our sky is but a passing cloud of ominous and unhealthy vapours rising from the swamps of political misdirection of the stream of national life. These dark mists will pass away when the breach in the river is closed and the swamps get dry for lack of illicit water.

The Muslim voice too will then deliver only this message. For, this message is of the soil of India. It is the song of her rivers and seas, hills and dales, plains and forests. It does not belong to one tribe or sect, or to any one race in particular. It is neither Hindu, nor Buddhist, nor Muslim nor Christian. It is in the precious gold-dust that rolls in our majestic, snow-fed waters which slake the thirst of all alike. It is a message of peace, reached through federation, decentralisation and surrender.

Every voice, Muslim or Hindu, will soon sing in its praise. For it is the message of India to the world, not of one race or tribe.

If a large country, a sub-continent like India with three hundred and twenty millions of infinite variety and of endless resources, be forged into a unitary government, practically a handful of men controlling its political power-station, the main switch would surely be turned off, in some spiteful moment, on all light and culture, goodness and humanity. Aggression would then be as certain as day. At least the whole of Asia would be drenched with blood, and this land of peace turned into a slaughter-house.

Never ; never. India will revolt to a man against this vulgar ambition to forge a sub-continent into a mighty sword which may be drawn by any political adventurer of requisite audacity, against humanity, Asian or European.

Cultural and spiritual unity is the thing the whole world craves for, not political unity which only the breed of Napoleons want to use for their own ambitious purposes. If the sovereign power of all governments could be broken now into tiny pieces full, functioning and alive in the Village Councils, man would be far nearer peace and security than under any other form of government. India will never assist her own

self-destruction voluntarily by voting for unitary government.

India had escaped a paralysing unitary government till this last half-a-century. It was our cultural greatness and our eye to the future happiness of the human race as a whole that prevented, by the unanimous wish of the people, the soul-killing mask and armour of a centralised, unitary government which gathers all life into an ugly knot. The future is only to those who lead thoroughly decentralised and politically free lives. For, decentralisation is freedom and life. Centralisation is captivity and death. It is a blind boulder across the stream of life at its narrowest bend in the high ranges.

It is the result of human experiences—politics is a soul-killer. Rulership is the meanest of man's necessities, fruitless even if carried on only in a spirit of comradeship and compassion. For it makes other activities impossible, except perhaps trade and commerce, its mutual friend. It is opposed to all the higher urges in man. At best, it is a medicine in the transitional stage on the wayside of evolution. In moderate doses, it has a cleansing power. It is a help to check and clear the system of impurities. In over-doses, it is a fatal poison, more dreaded because slow. Government is a medicine, labelled by seers as a slow poison, and administered by quack politicians generally in over-

doses to show quick effect, and the excellence of their healing art, in the short period of office given to them in these days.

How good and clean our lives would be if only every citizen remembers this central fact! Our Swaraj must be free, spacious, self-contained and self-evolved, laid out on the lines of our ancient *Dharma* with love and liberty to all. The heart-centres of our national life should be spread out in the unity and perfection of our many villages and never be gathered into an ugly knot like London or New York. The West is paying dearly for its centralised national, political and industrial life. Such Swaraj as the West enjoys to-day is hardly worth a pin's head or a cat's tail, where the many toil for the few. Let not the child of Renascent India be deformed by mal-feeding and tight clothing or become a victim to the folly of servile imitation. /

## CHAPTER VII.

### INDIAN STATES AND BRITISH INDIA

TO harness the full resources of India to the harmonious work not only of peaceful internal administration but also of authoritative and useful work in the Assembly of Nations, the Indian States' present isolation and separate functioning should cease. The solution of this delicate problem is undoubtedly vital to the larger solution, the emergence of a stable, Swaraj India. But the difficulties are not so great as they are made to appear largely owing to the peculiar position the Princes occupy in India, and the spectacular impression they manage to convey abroad and to the powers that be.

It is good to remember that ninety-five per cent. of the Indian States are very small ones with scanty resources and population. Only about a dozen really count. Even they, most of them, are very recent formations. They were created by the personal valour of their founders only very recently during and after the break up of the Maharatta and Mogul powers. They are all more or less one hundred



years old. Even during this short period, the active exercise of peaceful and undoubted sovereign powers by them was very much uncertain and chequered owing to the unsettled times they had passed through. And after the British Government became their over-lord, till within very recent times, almost the beginning of this century, the political agent of the British power exercised such full control even in matters of internal administration that the rulers were almost nominal figure heads gracing a powerless *gadi*.

And the measure of liberation the rulers have achieved recently is entirely due to the resurgence of Indian Nationalism in British India which led to a change of policy on the part of the suzerain power with reference to the Indian States. This great debt which the Princes owe to the Indian Nationalistic movement is not recognised in current discussions. Much less is it felt by them, that the governance of India is a common cause and a common benefit, and everything else should be subordinated to this paramount ideal. This lack of perception is all due to a faulty political atmosphere and education. But we have hopes in the patriotic traditions of these ruling houses when the critical moment of national unity and settlement, in the wake and fulfilment of an international purpose, arrives, achieving the divine design

of a peaceful life for India and through it for the whole world.

It is said that the Samurais made the glory of modern Japan possible by the noblest act of voluntary surrender known to history. When the occasion comes, both the Muslim and the Hindu Princes will surely make a voluntary surrender of their treaty rights and privileges in exchange for a common Indian citizenship so that they may the better bring to the great task of national reconstruction of Swaraj India, the fine personal qualities they certainly now possess.

There is yet another vital movement in India whose fulfilment is impossible with the Indian States as they are, isolated and repugnant, like alien matter in the flesh. As the Indian nation now is, it is only a beautiful vase broken to pieces and mispieced together again, making an ugly thing of the whole. The desire to carve India into linguistic provinces is a healthy desire for a decentralised and free life which seeks for its fullest expression a favourable atmosphere, and a soil racy with indigenous traditions and ideals. It is a vital movement quite on the right lines, if properly guided with a humanitarian and international outlook. It should not degenerate into a mere patriotic shouting for local names and fames, and a

vision which falsely glorifies everything provincial into something great.

This desire for homogeneous provinces on the linguistic and cultural basis can be satisfied only on a thorough redistribution of area, be it British India or Indian States. In such a scheme only one thing is open to the ruling chiefs. It is a noble, voluntary surrender of all their public rights to the governance of their States. This would help the nation as a whole by setting free their talents, and applying them to the larger national issues instead of their own parochial problems and pleasures. It would effect evenness of administration in all the areas. It would quietly contribute the most to the consolidation of India and its emergence on the world-theatre with full authority in its legitimate rôle.

Above all, the glutting sense of riches and possession which so vilely poisons all life now, and a little more pronounced in the Indian States, should yield place to a sense of duty, right conduct, public welfare, and common good and justice from the humblest to the highest. Any one domiciled in the sacred land of Bharatavarsha is always touched by this noble and ancient ideal of fixed duty and detached action. Then only the Indian Renaissance will not turn out to be a mere dry wind that passes

overhead displaying a few white clouds, kindling hopes and dashing them to the ground.

The Indian Princes are as much of India as any one else, and the world waits for their true service, more for the quiet radiance of their manly work than for the glitter of their choicest diamonds or the purest necklace of flawless pearls. They must feel a common pride and joy in the greatness of Mother India and Her record of work for the weal of the world, and join hands with us in the great humanitarian world-work that is the purpose of the century.

An ideal of economic equality coupled with political liberty in a world of the least governance is the inner urge of these renascent times. The fulfilment of this ideal will profoundly transform human nature, and take us to the next rung, almost a new being.

In India such dreams of a life rich and complete, simple and true are possible only with the perfect and healthy functioning of our villages. The prophecy of the twentieth century is the triumph of village life simple, loving and peaceful. The urban civilisation ushered in by steam-power has brought material comfort to a few at the expense of the many. Electricity and similar power derived from Nature will soon ruralise our urban life in a far richer way, and bring joy, peace, leisure and contentment to all.

Who can obstruct the descent of the flood<sup>1</sup> of celestial water springing from the high mountain ranges from above the melting snow-line?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE INDIAN VILLAGE

THE Indian village is ever worth a serious study as an ancient rendering of a fine civic ideal. Now it has a living attraction. For, 'back to the village' is the song of Renascent India. It is a preliminary to our achieving anything great. Before India can do her share of work for the commonweal of the world, she must put her own house in order and cleanse the feeding sources of her own genius. In the past, it was our village life that kept our culture pure and intact, the flame steady amidst dust-laden gusts of wind. Conquest and invasion did not injure us. They were assimilated at the expense of a few political and military adventurers and ambitious dynasties, rendering the national pulse only the more live and vigorous for such purging. So careful and wise was the distribution of the life-centres of our polity. They were never gathered together into an ugly knot. These tiny village republics acted like the cells in the respiratory organ, and cleansed the impurities of an ever-growing people. Coral-like, they stood the tide of time and assured for India cultural unity, continuity and permanence.

Why? Where is the magic in village life? The answer is, man is both gregarious and solitary—gregarious for gathering experiences, and solitary that he may chew the cud in loneliness and leisure, and assimilate them in a mood of transmuting rapture. Man too much alone destructively feeds upon himself, too much in the crowd he becomes a mere twig in the sea without drive or initiative. Village life beautifully harmonises the two, and prepares man for a higher plane of action, a simpler and more fruitful existence.

The Indian village, as a serious and successful social experiment in this direction, deserves a critical study. It has a special value both for its own sake as a vital Indian problem and for the message it seeks to convey to the whole world. Even as mere arithmetic, ninety per cent. of India, one-fifth of the human race, live in the villages and follow the plough. From a higher aspect, the Indian village is steeped in the sweetness and tradition of a continuous life with which India has not blessed many of her political institutions.

It is a good thing that attention is now centred on rural problems. It is timely. Disease reminds us of health. Decay brings ideas of renovation. Ever since the transfer of India to the Crown, the Indian village has been slowly crumbling into ruin like the pagoda of its own

temple. Pedants and professors who specialise in prophecies for the day teach us to suppress a tear at the happening of the inevitable. They talk of merciless world causes and pitiless economic laws. But thank God, a new wind is now blowing all over with rain-clouds on the sea-line.

The pure Indian village is somewhat rare now but not yet extinct. Many of its characteristic features remain. Within the last fifty years the mainspring has snapped. But the wheels have not yet stopped clicking and the hands still continue to show time in obedience to a long impulse. •

A true Indian village or a homogeneous group of villages nestling together within the well-marked boundaries of meandering rivers and roads, is always a self-supporting unit. It is a perfect whole, a complete thing not merely in the excellence of its soil and climate but also in the outlook and temper of its citizens. It has a definite atmosphere. It satisfies the first conditions of decent life. It raises its own corn and oil adequate to nourish its population. It has enough cattle for milk and for agricultural purposes. It has its own artisans to serve the primary needs of civilisation, though not its refinements and luxuries. Weavers, carpenters, smiths, barbers, washermen and potters work together for the commonweal of the village



with a devoted heart, for their interests are well entwined with those of the land-holding classes. For they too hold *maniyam* lands on service tenure from one generation to another and the *maniyam* is the choicest acre in the village and their pride and pay. The village temple crowns this material framework. It inspires all labour with a selfless joy. It promotes and keeps alive the unity and co-operation of the different classes in the village.

The real beauty and strength of the village system lie in the simple harmony between capital and labour. The one is intimate with the other. One works for the other and the need of each which is limited by a long course of tradition is the scale of reward. So minimum is the conflict. The village prosperity is firmly secured. Indeed, capital and labour are, to the casual eye, almost indistinguishable.

Every artisan and labourer is paid primarily by an allotment of land in the village adequate to keep a family in comfort as tropical needs are, though not in luxury. Certain fixed recurring duties are the incidents of the tenure. And extra work is remunerated by payment in kind—paddy, ragi or maize. The efficient monetary system of the civilized but bankrupt modern world plays little part in this primitive but idyllic society. The carpenter who fashions the plough and the blacksmith who forges the share

have their *maniyam* lands and free residential quarters. So also the barber, the washerman and the potter. There is hardly a man in the village, who does not look up to agriculture as his primary profession. So everything on which the prosperity of agriculture depends is carefully looked after. Work has the joy of recreation and the sweat on the brow is a pearl-like drop. For you do not sweat for another. The manuring of the fields, the clearing of the silt of the channels, co-operative irrigation and drainage of the fields, tank-digging and temple festivals and sundry repairs are done with a fidelity of spirit and devotion of heart that lift common work to the level of a sacred duty. When so many have to be provided with lands, none holds so predominant a share as to control or paralyse the small holders.

Now we shall consider the internal arrangement for the actual agricultural work in the fields. Every labourer or tenant, like the artisan, has his own free quarters and his *maniyam* lands, usually half an acre. He is paid also daily wages in kind on active field days. In addition, he has a share in the gross produce varying from ten to twenty-five per cent. He is entitled to certain perquisites which include a pair of cloths on *Deepavali* or *Pongul* and on certain fixed festive days in the year, about half a dozen. Every birth and death in the house

of labour is entitled to a commiseration from capital.

There are also a few petty officers. They too are paid mainly by an allotment of lands. The *Talayari* has his *maniyam*. He is the village watchman, an important person who combines many offices in himself, chiefly police duties and the summoning and organising of labour for field work. The *Niranikan* has also his *maniyam*. His chief duty is to irrigate the fields impartially and attend to the growing crops, be they of the rich or the poor. In addition, he is entitled to a sheaf of corn on every threshing day in the harvest season.

Then superimposed on this simple framework is the celebrated Panchayat system which governs the village. It is a body usually of five and the work is honorary, an example which might well be followed by the central Executive Government of any country in the world. This village Panchayat is the only effective Government which the average citizen of South India had known and cared for till the British power reached its mighty, centralising arms from Delhi so as to control and shape the smallest inland village.

In the Panchayat, it is the president who really counts. He is often a hereditary holder coming from a family reputed for its learning, piety and character, and owning a decent share

of lands in the village. Neither wealth nor intellect by itself had ever commanded great respect in India till British Raj began to reward with well-minted and shapely coins, mere cleverness and adventurous energy. Piety, learning and character were everything. Theoretically, the chief Panchayatdar has great powers to summon and chastise any one. But tradition and his own broad humanity and culture fix him within a just orbit of *Dharma* and village work. The other Panchayatdars act as silent checks on any likely abuse of power by the chief. The one common ideal is the efficient cultivation of the land and a simple life of peace. If the mind is not very much cultivated in the modern sense with a plethora of books and an array of humid lectures, at least land and life are to the utmost. The weeds are pruned with incessant care. A full, humane and moral life is the reward. Nature and men are golden in the true Indian village like the ripening corn in the field.

Nature has made everything perishable and the Indian village never attempts to preserve Nature's gifts in the cold storage of coins, copper or silver. So whenever any one has surplus grains or vegetables that must surely perish sooner or later, he distributes them gladly to his fellowmen on improvement work or religious vows or general philanthropy.

What is raised by co-operative labour is returned to the villagers, if not in the exact ratio of the quality or quantity of work of each benefited, at least fairly and adequately. So no one is actually unemployed or destitute in a true Indian village. The secret of this prosperity is in the universal devotion to the plough as the primary emblem of wealth and the trade seclusion which the village enjoys.

The above sketch may seem ideal but it is real even now where the essential conditions obtain. Even to-day there are a few *Inam* or tax-free villages on the banks of the Cauvery which have this loveliness and peace because of the shelter they have from the raids of government and the howling trade winds of civilisation. Once it was the rule.

This idyllic peace is possible only on certain conditions. Let us now examine the external rules for this internal prosperity. There should be no exacting central Government above the village Panchayat, which resorts to direct and heavy taxation on land. There should be no export of food-stuffs to any considerable degree in return for luxuries. Agricultural products should never be exchanged for the industrial.

. But, to many, these are impossible rules under modern political and economic conditions especially in India. A costly and huge central

Government, coupled with an agricultural population which has developed a taste for industrial manufactures which a village can never produce without maiming its identity, has rapidly hastened the decay of the Indian village and has almost blotted out within half a century one of the fairest and most ancient of our institutions which survived many changes and onslaughts for over twenty centuries.

Now let us examine the decay and the present condition of the Indian village. Previous to the advent of the British, political control was never effective. A central Government never functioned in India with capacity to levy regularly every year for even a decade or two a fixed tax even from remote villages. Political power shifted like sand dunes on the sea coast, and the Indian village was never really within the grip of a central Government for any considerable length of time, except for the Punjab and a small tract round Delhi. The financial and currency net was never woven so close and strong as to catch even the smallest fish frolicking in the sea. Predatory raids there were into the hearts of villages now and then, but the plunder was limited by the carrying capacity of the horseback—food-stuffs weighed heavier than their worth in gold and occupied more area in transit! Neither horse nor man had the infinite mechanical greed of a huge

monetary system which sucks the life-blood, like a vampire, to all alike invisible, itself un-enriched and unsatiated.

A central Government is no doubt a blessing to a few but it is hardly one for the many, unless it is content to collect only slight and indirect taxes and devote them for the spread of a life of plain living and high thinking. Let us see how an Indian village fares now. Owing to the growth of population, almost every village has now reached its maximum capacity. In India, land is directly taxed. A single small holding of even the fraction of an acre cannot claim any immunity from land-tax. Roughly a village pays from twenty-five to thirty-three per cent.—and the percentage increases if the yield decreases, as the land-tax is fixed—of its net agricultural income as revenue to the Government for the privilege of being governed and gets nothing in return in terms of food-stuffs. It really means that a village exports three months' food to pay for peace and protection and to keep alive the towns and high officials, and correspondingly it starves.

In the wake of civilisation new tastes and habits are being acquired which are neither nourishing nor necessary. In return for cloths from Manchester, soaps from Paris, sugar from Java, matches from Sweden and kerosine oil from America, another thirty per cent of the

food-stuffs of a village are exported. And the drink shop under license from the Government which make a good revenue out of it, completes the exploitation of the poor, voluntary and involuntary. After these several items of severe drain, a village is now left with food sufficient for only three or four months in the year. Even in an Indian village there is and will be an unequal distribution of this three months' supply. So what is left is a bare subsistence even for the big land-holder. The labouring classes suffer acutely, and, more and more join their ranks in the general ruin. *Maniyams* have been either annexed by greedy landlords or have become unattractive. For, agriculture has become unprofitable under these conditions. The common co-operative work on which it thrives, such as silt-clearing, manuring of fields and rearing of cattle, are naturally neglected. The joy in work that springs from a sure harvest is no more. In a decade ruin is certain. And ruin has come.

Nor these only. The worst evil that has now befallen an Indian village is the quantitative and the qualitative depletion of its best men in the wake of these initial difficulties. The best men, its hereditary *Panchayatdars*, are no more in the village. They have fled to towns for a living, as vakils and clerks duly hoping to become Judges and Magistrates, Collectors



and Council Members. Our vision, in the wake of Western ideas, nay our very bones, have become commercialised. Ambition, unreal and ruinous, is driving us away from real and nourishing work. The eddies of the market place have caught our souls. Its shouts and excitement have deprived us of the voice of the simple folk and the joys of humanity.

The remedy is simple on paper but difficult to work out in practice. The habits, ideals, taste and outlook of the people should change from the exotic to the indigenous, from the luxurious to the simple, from the urban to the rural, from the raw new to the very old. Simple life should once again be fixed as the ideal for all time.

The revenue exactions of the Government should considerably lessen and small holdings be totally exempted from tax. The Government should bestow more attention on irrigation and rural needs and think more of corn which is India's need than of cotton. It has done so far very efficiently only revenue collection and police duties. It must hereafter function more in accordance with the genius and traditions of the people and at far less cost. It must revitalise the hundreds of Indian villages by reviving the old agencies which rendered the Indian village a little paradise. Its preservation is the first duty of any Govern-

ment. The duty is clear to one who knows the significance of an Indian village and its importance to the world.

What is the meaning of an Indian village? What is its significance to the world?

The Indian village offers the only solution to the economic ills inherent in every progressive society which remodels itself for a higher stage. It enshrines a great and a human principle. It recognises the fundamental right of man to be paid a salary not in accordance with his skill but in accordance with his needs for honest work done, and paid in the most primary form of wealth, assignment of lands. In the eye of the Indian village, wages are equal for all, for stomachs are an equal span for all, be he the cleverest artisan, or the most stupid tiller of the soil.

Energy, intellect, piety and character are best rewarded in India, not in an upward and soaring scale of salaries, but by increased affection and respect of the people. Is this not a lesson to the West and the East? The payment is never sumptuous. For sumptuousness is not at all in the line of our philosophy. We take a pride in limiting our needs. We always honour simplicity, character and piety. We do not worship the mere intellect as they do in the West, for it is after all only a means to make a full man, even as an engine is to a factory.

The Indian village stands for a great principle. Every form of labour must be paid equally, be the worker, the highest State official or the porter who carries his luggage, for the true economic needs of men are equal, as hunger is the same the world over—two measures of paddy for each per day. This is the rich cry and the world-message of the Indian village.

The Indian village is a bright crystal which reflects a great civic ideal. It is the most direct and cheapest form of Government. It is India's solution to the craze of over-government, costly, grinding, sterile, pale and unshapen, that is now sweeping into an ugly and futile knot the best brains of the world. Simplicity alone can save humanity. The Indian village is the very embodiment of simple life.

The Indian village is not a necessary accident in an agricultural country. It is the fruit of a philosophic enquiry into the highest wheelings and the lowest circlings of man. Our Rishis have built it as a hermitage for collected humanity on the way-side of evolution. It is an ideally fit abode for men of learning, piety and character. It is the working place for the worker and the cloister for the scholar. The one could change easily into the other, like a cloud into the rain. It is the best reconciliation between the perpetual demand for action which matter makes, and freedom from action which

the spirit demands. Even as the body is to the soul, the village is to a body of men—a haven of rest for the water-laved and storm-bitten ship.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SOME PROBLEMS OF SWARAJ INDIA

THE problems of Swaraj India are seemingly many and diverse. But they fall under one central line of activity. Ultimately they resolve themselves in terms of the health and vitality of the villages. The sovereign duty of the Government of India is to keep unimpaired this vast network of tiny republics, the vital centres of our national life. So the foremost of the present day problems is agricultural indebtedness.

#### 1. AGRICULTURAL INDEBTEDNESS

Next to cooking, man has ever been a borrowing animal. But agricultural indebtedness in India has never been so acute as during the last two or three decades. The causes are both internal and external and play upon and nourish each other with progressively destructive results.

The population has long ago reached the maximum feeding capacity of an Indian Village. In normal years with good monsoons, a typical Indian village produces barely enough food-stuffs to nourish its present population

and, strictly speaking, affords no surplus for export. But the real phenomenon is tragic. An under-fed population is obliged to export its food-stuffs. Owing to "a higher standard of living" in the wake of a new industrial civilisation, twenty-five to thirty per cent of the food-stuffs grown in a village are exported in order to buy industrial products, necessary and unnecessary. This payment in food-stuffs—grains, pulses and oil-seeds for industrial products, is one of the far-reaching causes of the agricultural indebtedness of the country and of the all round starvation. If one industrial product is exchanged for another, one evil struggles with another, and keeps up the show of prosperity at least of the market-place. But when agricultural products are exchanged for the industrial, blood is exchanged for rose-water. However exquisite may be the aroma, it would hardly be nourishing. Such an exchange can never be fair and equal even if Indian. And much less fair if foreign.

Again, a day's industrial labour is never held in the economic and financial jugglery of the industrial world as equivalent to a day's agricultural labour. Even if desired, it can never be reflected with precision in the complex, huge, shifting and selfish monetary system of the modern world. The exploiting industrialist silently assumes and takes superior wages for

his labour, skilled as he calls it, and a fortune for his happy invention or speculation. The poor, hard-working peasant has to pay for it and goes under.

To escape this mighty industrial and fiscal salt-sea flood, you need a spiritual life-belt, a reversion to a plain life which does not seek for the joys of things which cannot be made at home. Only this simplicity can radically cure agrarian indebtedness. Field-labour is dull and irritating, uncertain and irksome. A motor car is nice ; the glory of motion is a joy for ever. But you cannot sell a year's harvest to Ford and live on mere motion.

Another chief cause is this. Twenty-five to thirty-three per cent of the food-stuffs are exported to pay *kist* or revenue to the Government, direct and indirect. The return to the village in any material shape for this compulsory gift is nothing, except for the Village Munsif's and accountant's salary.

Hence the result is that every village exports or is compelled to export from fifty to sixty-five per cent. of its agricultural produce, and no village can really afford this as a surplus after the legitimate needs of its population are satisfied. So the indebtedness is chronic, which tends steadily to lower further the agricultural prosperity.

Certain bold measures are necessary. In the first place, the redemption of the mind of the Indian from the glamour of a luxurious life should take place immediately. Plain living is more imperative than even high thinking. I distrust the mere intellectual. Piety and simplicity, meekness and reverence ~~have~~ higher places in evolution.

Land Mortgage Banks  
Banks to lend at four per  
The Usurious Loans Act  
as to penalise rates of interest  
cent. Nature yields only  
sweated labour. This real  
effect of transforming  
the toil of the industrious, into

## 2. MASS EDUCATION

Next in importance is mass education. In point of literacy, India of all civilised countries takes the lowest rank, though by the peculiar vitality of her traditional culture, there is a high degree of general intelligence and keenness of average outlook. It is good to be cultured without the neurosis of school and college life, and the dreary hours with a pile of text-books. India is cultured no doubt in this way. But the modern needs and the urge of a higher purpose require the broader and intenser results which literacy alone gives. The present school education is utterly divorced from life and is



meant to help not the students but the book binder, ink and paper merchant, printer, slate and pencil maker and such odd tribes who would immediately go out of employment the moment education is set on the right lines. The whole thing is tragic beyond words, a total waste of tender and beautiful lives.

Oral instruction, personal experience, peripatetic life are of the essence of the true education of the young. Experience gathered in play in an atmosphere of utmost freedom free from awe or fear gives the correct impulse to the proper growth of the mind and makes one a fit citizen for life's varied work and trials. The Scout movement is the most excellent thing we have so far achieved, and the best I have known as the first step in the right direction. Our schools with their bare mud walls, screening Life and Nature from the eager, juvenile eyes are the worst prison-houses man has built blindly for his own children to keep them away from real learning. Teachers are melancholy jail warders weary of their sightless vigils, with the monotony relieved for a moment with a gleam of joy only on the pay-day.

The deep shade of a banyan tree or a mango grove, by the side of some water with sand dunes all over kissed by the truant wind, is Nature's own school for little children. In such a fine little *Ashrama*, the rearing of the young

on the most beautiful and natural lines, is a creative work of joy for its own sake. Every village should have at least one such lovely meeting place for the young. And with the minimum of slate and chalk, pencil and paper, books and notes, the mass education of the three hundred and twenty millions should go on on the most hopeful lines. Then India would gather the fullest of the coming Renaissance, and leave behind a priceless epoch of great achievements for the benefit of posterity.

### 3. MILITARY EXPENDITURE

The next problem is the huge military expenditure. For a peaceful nation like India which has always received with every mark of hospitality every invader, this huge standing army is an inversion of its harmonious life of love for all. The army should be quickly cut to nothing. India would incur no risk greater than it had incurred these five thousand years. We need be afraid of no invaders by sea or land if only we follow the *Sanatana Dharma* of our land, and not the materialistic creed of making money somehow by exploiting others.

It is only the lust for trade and commerce and riches that create the appetite and need for wars and standing armies on the most up-to-date lines. Wipe out the causes of this fevered thirst for gold and for your neighbour's right to his daily food, life would be one lovely dream of

peace. Armies would be but ugly, barbarous shows in such a world. War-mists would melt into thin vapours in such a sunshiny, warm air.

Reject the huge, false, monetary and economic system that secretly waters the noxious plant of war at its roots. Cast off all things which you cannot make by your own hands and vow yourself to a life of utmost simplicity. Disdain to live on any man's labour but your own. Interdependence, commercial, political and social is the silken cord of bondage. Cut it with your keen-edged mind. You will find yourself one fine, magic morning freer than the freest bird in the air, and your voice now laden with an ancient sorrow will change to one of ethereal music.

#### 4. THE COST OF ADMINISTRATION

The cost of the Indian administration is the heaviest burden. The Civil Service, if it is heaven-born, is the most earth ridden. It is the most dependent on worldly goods. It is the most pampered and most richly paid beyond all proportion. It makes everyone sweat the greatest for its purely negative services to our culture and civilisation. None in India need be paid at the present purchasing power of the rupee more than one thousand rupees a month, even the Governor of a province, and the District heads not more than three hundred a month.

The axe should be mercilessly applied to cut down the rank growth of years. The whole scheme should be slowly graded down till the atmosphere for honorary work is created, and everyone is willing to work for the love of it, as an eager player in the greatest play of life for the mere joy of playing it.

### 5. TAXATION

The burden of taxation is very unevenly distributed in India. The present system of taxation and land tenure with its endless complications is primitive, unjust and uneven. It crushes the poor and panders to the rich. It is the historical imprint of the grades of disorder and selfishness of the last three centuries of Indian history. It is now sitting tight on the growth of our national life feeding but the excrescent malformations of the body politic. Swaraj India's first duty to itself and to agriculture lies in the just and humane revision of the entire system of land taxation and tenure so as to make the incidence light, fair, just and even throughout.

### 6. CREATION OF SMALL HOLDINGS IN PERPETUITY

The soul of the ancient Indian village lay in the fair measure of equality with which lands had been assigned to its citizens thus bending even the proudest neck to the godly yoke of agriculture. Under modern economic causes

this balance is being upset and prosperity destroyed widening the gulf between the rich and the poor. The acres are getting concentrated in the hands of a few, driving to urban areas many a peaceful tiller of the soil adding to the misery and squalor of slum life. The best way to restore this harmony is by creating small holdings in perpetuity.

Credit is misery. It tempts and ruins. The speculative instinct breaks out into a slow and self-destructive fire. Law and public opinion should enable the creation of three-acre holdings in perpetuity and embalm them for ever by rendering them impartible, inalienable and tax-free. This will check extravagance, greed and speculation and keep the poor man on the straight path of industry and virtue in his own small farm. The theme is wide. Sympathetically worked out in detail, it is utterly practicable. The idea is as old as the greed and perversity of the ruling classes. This one measure will do in the long run more than anything else for the self-respect and joy of humanity. Man, on the final day of peace and love, will no longer be a borrowing but a happy, self-sufficient, cooking animal, with a triple vision of the universe.

‘ Some of these problems and many more on these lines crave for immediate solution. The load on the peasant’s back, because of these

selfish follies of leading men, has grown pyramid-like almost breaking his spinal cord and driving him mad to anarchy and chaos.

Renascent India, to justify herself should immediately solve these problems, and enter on her inheritance with a solemnly vowed programme, selfless and constructive, inspired only by the unchanging rules and ideals of *Dharma*. Her mission is high and the coming days are spacious.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE HIGHER PROBLEM

THE solution of these great national problems of India rests on the solution of a higher problem, the orientation of Indian life and character, the emergence of a full, well-regulated and active life from the illusions of a quietistic philosophy, from dreams of virtue to the practice of it in daily social life. Our qualities are essentially personal and flow obscure like springs under-ground only to collect in some strange, inaccessible depths. May a water diviner bring it to the surface and guide it into fruitful fields!

India is a continent of many millions, the human race segmented in all its comprehensive varieties. All stages of civilisation at different levels are found amidst us. We have none the less achieved to a high degree, refinement and culture, a uniform ethical and spiritual tradition from Benares to Rameshwar. The average Indian possesses many of the higher qualities of evolution, humility and gentility, patience and forbearance, peace and love. But they all lie in the mass flat and obscure like

marbles in a quarry. We have not yet worked out our own qualities in practice. Our inherited acres of real virginal richness lie fallow overgrown with weeds. Our qualities are buried like ores of gold hidden in the bowels of the earth waiting to be minted into coins, symbolising the current wealth of the nation.

But every quality has its own defects. For all virtues, like all luminaries, if they emit light, cast their shadows as well on a lower plane. And personal qualities have their corresponding civic deficiencies. Humility and gentility may mean a lack of courage and generosity in public life. Patience and forbearance may well degenerate into cowardice and loss of self-respect in the rough walks of daily life. Peace and love may mean the absence of a vigorous interest in corporate life and in the struggle for existence. Individual perfection is often gained by a more or less complete destruction of the collective sense. Self-illumination denies us a living and real knowledge of the sufferings of our neighbour. Compassion then exists in a philosophical vacuum unrelated to life.

All these defects of our qualities have resulted in a more or less total want of public and civic virtues. This has led to the misinterpretation of India even on her higher side, and to an undeserved and foolish contempt for our refinement and culture, in complete ignorance



of the higher qualities which these defects themselves serve to indicate.

Individual refinement, like scientific discoveries in the laboratory, is a personal achievement often gained only in isolation and meditation. Gaining it, we should not hoard it as a miser. Its virtue is increased only by sharing it with others, by its use for the collective good.

Into this second stage of a broader and nobler service to humanity the renascent movement is now seeking to lift India. Shall we turn a deaf ear to this inner voice of renascent India?

The average Indian makes a secret of everything, hides everyone of his qualities. His virtues live and die with him. He does not shape them into an inheritance nor weave them for posterity into a garland of effective tradition. He never shows them to another nor shares them with his neighbour. The result is almost a complete absence of public virtues and a corporate life. The sense of the common good in civic life makes no appeal to him. His "public" begins and ends with his family wherein he lavishes no doubt all his qualities freely.

The average man the world over with power is a tyrant and a coward without it. But the Indian is particularly so. The tropics have denied him the golden mean, the divine gift of moderation and restraint in the use of power. The average Indian with power is a brutal ty-

rant, without power a base coward. He does not care very much to acquire power or position initially. But once he gets it, even an ounce of it intoxicates him, and he craves for more and more till he gets drunk with it. He rarely exercises it with moderation tempered by public or humanitarian or even conscientious considerations. He without power behaves like a slave perpetually 'saluting' every day-break to midnight. He never resist the worst evil-sovereign love of self and encourages moment of fall. Then he vindictively carcass to pieces to and to his own depravity.

The average Indian does not ordinarily care very much for wealth but once he begins to acquire it he becomes a complete slave to it. It becomes an end in itself. He rarely thinks he is a trustee of it in however humble a measure. He does not recognise that he must use the surplus, at least a share of it, for the common good.

Personally he is very compassionate and self-sacrificing and shows it to an extraordinary degree in his relationship even with the remote members of his family. He is keenly responsive to the calls of charity at his own door. But to suffering on the high roads of life, he is

callous, he is indifferent. He passes by even without a sigh or a look of sympathy. His pity is suffering imprisonment in his own house and renascent India proposes to unlock the door.

Personally he is clean and of sanitary habits. But he throws his sweepings on his neighbour who in turn does likewise till they get settled in a frontier of rubbish heap marking the boundary line between them. It never strikes them that a penny worth of fire would make both of them clean and happy.

He does not believe in co-operation in public affairs though within the narrow bounds of his family he is an ideal co-operator even under the most exacting and adverse conditions. He thinks that co-operation in public affairs is but a pooling of vices and weaknesses where everyone carefully avoids bringing in his best, his real goods. He over-estimates himself. He has no trust in others. He thinks he alone brings the beautiful, unbroken grains of rice while his friends are putting into the hotch-pot mere chaff and rubbish. He may have some faith in himself but none in his neighbour.

Life is one self-help, he says in roundabout, polemical phrases, and he is inclined to think that he is the most self-made creature in the village. Taller he is, surer he feels that he is the architect of his own fortune which he should never squander on the undeserving, en-

vious lazy loots of the village. He has learnt to smile the most complacent, complete smile. The cucumber that grows wildly on the rubbish mound of his beautiful backyard, he declares, is the finest in the world.

Or why should he do a good act in the secular field for the mere love of it whose full beneficence does not fall within his own catchment area? He does not believe in helping others, for often it may be the wrong man, the ungrateful wretch. Generosity of purse, word or spirit, he thinks, may amount to an interference with and denial of divine justice. Who has the right to hasten or brighten the *karma* of another and tamper with the unfolding of pregnant and divine causes? Why man should try a divine act, a prerogative that is within the sole jurisdiction of God, and perhaps provoke His ire and bring it down on oneself?

This complete atrophy of magnificent personal qualities in their application to corporate life is largely due to the long political subjection of India for over one thousand years, and to an undeveloped gospel of individual perfection against the motley embarrassments of collective service. The civic sense is yet to be born. The pride of possession is in sharing it with another. The objective eye, the love for your neighbour, the vision for the beauty of the men and things around you are all yet to

be gained in their full and complete sense. A profoundly subjective and listless view of life has got to be roused towards the necessity of an objective and vigorous apprehension of this full and moving world.

Again, a kind of inferiority complex has bitten our soul and blinded our vision. We are unable to discover our own great men till some cultured alien does it for us. Then we crowd round and clap hands as poor relations do round a man who has suddenly got rich. Our half-open mouths and eyes gape with wonder and jealousy at the miracle. But the great man himself turns out to be a poor affair, for he tastes the fruits of victory too late in life when dyspepsia has completely crept in. He too is in the grip of the inferiority complex. He finds himself unable to escape the depression of the atmosphere. He sees nothing worthy in his countrymen. The chill neglect of years has broken him down and the famed opulence of his evening hours he spends in idleness. His joy in work ceases and his interest in life becomes cynical. He views his own institutions and men with an alien, lofty and parenthetical air.

So even the tallest among us do not discover the authentic ways for shaping with intimate sympathy the young lives on whom real citizenship and progress lie. So no wonder our

leaders are found to be pigeon-eyed, and even this small aperture for light they close in the exuberance of their meditative nihilism chiefly derived from outlandish success. They feel they owe nothing to indigenous sources. It is charity if they do public work.

No wonder then that nothing has been achieved in India from generation to generation. For the fire of the day is not kept alive for the morrow. Young talents go to tragic waste in our country. Fresh and fertilising waters direct from the heavens are wasted into the Arabian Sea. The elder finds it impossible to recognise on generous terms the younger, for he remembers his own unaided and chequered past. So the experience and authority so valuable for all social organisations are never transmitted in a continuous stream of tradition to succeeding generations. Not merely the leaves and flowers but even the fruits rot in the unhappy valleys of my fertile Motherland!

This state of affairs is psychologically "compensated" for by an exaggerated admiration for the foreigner. Our mania for aliens is at the root of our national degeneration. The inferiority complex is fouling every source of our activity and paralysing every effort with a strange disbelief in our own powers. Till we get rid of this pathetic weakness the task of national reconstruction would be impossible.

The urge of renascent India would prove as moaning a waste as the sea that lashes the rock in vain or the wind that roams over trackless waters.

Freedom, individual and collective, is the only known touch that healeth the sick and maketh the blind see. Renascent India has in its bosom this great gift of God. But it will never drop to us like rain from the cloud. We must work to win it and deserve to retain it every moment. We can get it without shedding a drop of blood or sending a single youth to jail if from tomorrow we strive to apply our personal qualities for the common good of the nation, and refuse to use them in mere services of servility.

We must learn to believe in ourselves and our neighbour, and feel for him and learn to share our good things with him. Learn to be generous in purse, word and spirit. For generosity moves and makes the higher world and renders our life infinitely sweet bringing man nearer God.

Social service and social justice is the song of renascent India. Work that you may share cheerfully the fruits of your toil with others. Work neither for yourself nor for the nest of your family that you may lay golden eggs for your own selfish joys. Work with a generous heart and an open mind. Work that you may make the whole world your family.

Such is the message of Renascent India. It is the only solution to the higher problem. On our purity, integrity and character, work and faith depends the functioning of all our institutions for the common good. No well-laid constitution would ever work without the proper men. Nothing we gain will be permanently ours till this message of selfless work, peace and goodwill is worked out in daily life. This is the highest *Dharma*. Then every problem of corporate and individual existence is solved.

For when the sovereign gold is yours the innumerable pennies are also yours at the world's counter.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE REAL PARADISE

INDIA is now undoubtedly in the early stages of a great Renaissance whose life-giving, life-renewing energy if properly used will compare most favourably with any of the greatest periods in Indian history ; the fruitful and splendid dawn of the Vedic period or the morning glory of the Upanishads, the spacious and 'mighty days of Buddha and Asoka, or the strenuous days of Akbar and Shivaji. The air is now rich with the political cry for freedom. But it is only the exiguous voice of a great soul in revolt, an ancient life in the infinite stages of another renewal, the deep disorders that prelude an atomic change that transmutes copper into gold. We are now almost in sight of the promised land.

A full and felicitous life with political liberty, economic equality, cultural and spiritual growth for all, life in the Indian village has known in the past to the measure to which each age could transmit its best to the Time-Spirit. The coming new age with the ample and wonderful fruits of Science, will convert the now stagnant

village life into a little paradise on earth, if only Swaraj India establishes the twin-contact both with the true currents of modern thought and science, and with the living cultural and spiritual traditions and longings of India, and if the pressing economic, social and political problems are resolved with vision, sympathy, imagination and humanitarian outlook.

Of such problems the most vital is the rejuvenation of the Indian village true to its ancient civic ideals and the renascent impulse now speeding our hopes. The new Indian village will not be a mere replica, a thoughtless repetition of the old. It will have the beauty of form of a rebirth, the new features of an emergence. It will not reject any of the blessings of Science. It will throb with the aid of the new powers that man has found in his mastery of nature-forces. Electric or radio or some still unborn and unnamed power will do the drudgery of economic and fleshy existence, the slave-duties of home life from cooking to cleaning, from flying to sporting.

The great rebirth of the Indian village clothed in all the singular majesty of a new coming is the true Paradise for every Indian. It has also a message of peace and love to the whole world, a beautiful, quiet, self-centred existence where from the cradle to the grave there is a perfumed continuity of expression both in individual and

collective life. It will be a song in short, more spontaneous than the music of the singing bird of early dawn.

The ideal of collective welfare is fully realised only by the perfection of the individual. That life alone is truly beautiful which shares in just proportion the joys of action and meditation in a rhythmic cycle of perfect equipoise. Life which neither seeks nor rejects has the fullest value both temporary and permanent. Life which needs nothing, which shuns nothing, which goes in quest of nothing is the rarest and the choicest, and the fullest in Nature.

Utmost freedom is the cry of all growing life. It is the secret of creative evolution. The spirit continually strives to escape the bondage of matter, the slave-labour to the gross. In the plane of his own evolution, each shall have the freedom to rise to the highest reaches of his self-expression, and the inequalities if any shall be only internal and never imposed from without.

The essence of all Renaissance is that proper use of its liberated impulse and energy should be made at the psychological moment of its maturity. The fields should be ready, ridges repaired, soil turned, seeds sown, ere the cloud-burst descends. Then only the harvest will be ample and the joy of plenty shared by all.

We have faith in the leaders Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsee, and European, that the inner voice, the true and lofty urge of Renascent India will reach them, touch their heart and conscience to united action at the appropriate moment of Destiny.

Yet another great event hangs on the proper reordering of Indian life. On the quick solution of the Indian problem rests the walking pace of the whole world to the distant and cherished goal. The journey to the Promised Land is a long way and the speed of the straggling caravan of humanity is the speed of its slowest member. In the collective march of a species, no nation, nay not even an individual can be left out without its own minute but effective reaction on the whole, without impeding the general progress. May this vision of the true law of life be vouchsafed to the black, brown, yellow, and white bureaucrats of the world who choke the stream of human life like so many erratic and meaningless boulders in mid-course at the most fateful turnings of the river!

The lure of the world has ever been, since man learnt to sail across the seas, commerce and gold, trade and economics. One perfect rule of life is, neither buy nor sell, nor enjoy a thing which your own little fingers cannot shape for your joy. But man has strayed far, indeed

very far, away from this golden rule. Currency, backed and unbacked, in paper and silver, has kept the world always limping after its ideals, the many always poor and the few ever rich, and none contented or peaceful.

O! India, this has never been your *Dharma*. You forsook it that you might buy and sell in the world's market place. Never will true Swaraj be yours till you learn neither to buy nor to sell for copper or gold. Your thinkers, sad at heart, watch with anxious care your going astray from your ancient *Dharma*, losing your soul that you may buy and sell in the world's market place, in paper drafts and telegraphic transfers. The all-ailing world asks you to do your share of the common work, lifts its eyes to you for a new religion and a new order of men who will bring love and peace into the Federation of Man, and not scrap-iron or shining bits of glass.

We want Swaraj, we want freedom for all, not only for our own sake. For, the present Indian unrest, though immediately political, is finely saturated with the compassion and the culture, the refinement and the emotion of Buddhist India. Renascent India has a message of service to the whole world. He is a traitor to the human cause who seeks to stifle this voice or imprison this aspiration.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SWARAJ CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA

THE political machinery we devise for Swaraj India will be the real measure of our own achievement in turning the renascent energy into national reconstruction on all sides, even as the bucket we send down the well fixes the flow of water into the fields. The teaming millions of India long for political liberty, economic equality and the freedom to evolve in all directions, each according to the bent and bias of his own mind. A minimum of government shall be the central idea of the framework. The constitution shall be light and flexible. It shall not sit heavy on the heart of the nation. It shall stimulate full-blooded development on all sides.

#### 1. VILLAGE COUNCIL OR PANCHAYAT

Every village or homogeneous group of villages shall have a village council in which shall vest the administration of the village. Every hundred of the population of a village as per census every decade shall be represented by one member in the village council. But in no case shall the village council be less than five in number.

The life of the council shall be for one year. The election shall be by ballot on the basis of universal adult franchise. The village council may elect its own chairman for conducting its business.

The village council shall be in charge of irrigation sources and channels, tanks, temples, fisheries, schools both vocational and academic, libraries, health, sanitation and all other rural needs and amenities.

The village council shall be assisted by an executive officer preferably of local knowledge and experience who may be called the village *munsiff*. He shall be assisted by an accountant or *karnam* and a staff composed of a *talayiari* or a watchman who does general police duties, and a *niranikan* or irrigation overseer. The executive shall carry out the resolutions of the village council.

It shall levy the tax in its own right through its own agencies at rates of assessment which shall not exceed the maximum rates fixed by the Provincial Council. Small holdings of an acre shall be tax-free. Fifty per cent. of its revenue collection, it shall hold for its own rural needs and purposes of village improvement and administration. It shall remit forty per cent. to the Provincial and ten per cent. to the National government, if necessary.

The village council shall be controlled in all judicial matters, civil and criminal, by a village court presided over by a judge. The village council shall act as the jury in all civil and criminal matters before the court which shall have jurisdiction in suits of the value of not more than two-thousand rupees, and in offences involving not more than six months imprisonment, in which cases they shall go to the District Court which shall have unlimited jurisdiction. There shall be only one appeal in all cases, however big or important, from the village court to the District Court if the value is above five hundred rupees, from the District Court to the High Court if above ten thousand rupees.

The judge of the village court shall be recruited from a highly educated class. The general advice and guidance of the judge shall also be sought for by the village council even in non-judicial matters. And he shall be an ex-officio member of the village council. The teacher and the doctor shall also be ex-officio members of the village council.

My hopes of village reconstruction are fondly centered on the village school-teacher. He shall be recruited from graduates who have travelled widely and had some special training. The teacher of the village school must be a real teacher with a flair and zeal for public work. He must have the capacity to dominate the vil-



lage intellectually and spiritually. In communion with the village judge, he must give the true lead to the village council and rural life, and create the proper atmosphere for progress fertilising the rural area with the waters diverted from the main currents of national and international life.

No officer in the village including the judge, the teacher and the doctor shall be paid more than thirty rupees a month at the present purchasing power of the rupee.

Every officer who acquires property anywhere and in any form during or after his tenure of office shall do so only on the scrutiny and sanction of the village council in whose jurisdiction he lives.

The qualification for membership in the village council shall be a fair degree of education, and non-ownership of property exceeding three acres. Membership of the council shall carry with it if necessary a subsistence allowance not exceeding thirty rupees a month. The chief executive officer shall take all his directions from the village council.

## 2. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The next step from the village shall be the District. There shall be no intermediate centralisation of administrative authority at *firca* or taluq headquarters. The administration of

the District shall vest in one chief executive officer, like the present collector. He shall have control over all the heads of the various departments, except the judicial, such as the police, irrigation, forest, education and medicine.

There shall be a District Court with unlimited jurisdiction in all matters. It shall be presided over by a judge assisted by a jury in all cases, of whom two or three shall be from the village from which the suit arises.

The District officers shall belong to the Provincial Service recruited thereto by a Public Service Commission on an all-India basis by a competitive examination which shall be open to all the races of the world.

No District officer shall be paid a salary of more than three hundred rupees a month. And the same rule as to the acquisition of property shall also apply to them.

### 3. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The Provinces shall be on the linguistic and cultural basis. When there is conflict as to the area of affiliation it shall be determined as desired by the majority of the people in the area of conflict. •

For every lakh of the population, there shall be one member in the Provincial Councils.

Where the population of any Province is less than twelve millions, the council shall not be less than 120 members.

The election to the councils shall be on universal adult franchise.

### THE EXECUTIVE

The Province shall be administered by an executive of not more than ten ministers with the Governor at the head. The council shall elect the chief minister who shall not be chosen from among themselves. The chief minister shall appoint the other ministers who shall not also be chosen from among the members of the council. After appointment, the ministers shall become ex-officio members of the council with right to sit, vote and debate. They shall be responsible to the council which may remove them at pleasure.

The Governor shall be nominated by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of India after consultation with his cabinet.

The Governor shall be paid not more than Rs. 1,000 a month and the ministers not more than Rs. 750 a month, if you cannot get first class men to do this public duty honorary.

\* The organisation, direction and control of the District heads shall vest in the Provincial Executive of ministers.

The life of the provincial council shall be for three years.

There shall be a High Court which shall consist of not more than ten judges. The salary of a judge shall not be more than Rs. 1,000 a month. The High Court shall hear appeals from the District Courts of the value of not less than ten thousand rupees.

#### 4. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

For every half-a-million of the population, there shall be one member in the Federal Assembly of India. 640 members will be the strength of our first Assembly.

The village council shall be the electoral body. The election need not be on the colossal scale which universal adult suffrage means. The election to the Assembly shall be by the system of proportional representation by the single transferable vote. There shall be no communal electorates either in the Federal or Provincial Government. The life of the Assembly shall be for five years.

The Viceroy shall be appointed by His Majesty the King of England for a period of seven years.

The Prime Minister shall be elected by the members of the Assembly, who shall not be chosen from among themselves. The Prime

Minister shall nominate his colleagues who shall not also be members of the Assembly at the time of the appointment. The ministers shall not be more than twelve in number. But after nomination they shall sit, debate and vote and may be removed at the pleasure of the Assembly.

The Governor-General shall be paid not more than Rs. 1,200 a month and the ministers not more than Rs. 1,000 a month.

In my scheme the salaries are of the very essence and so must be embodied in the Act. With huge salaries running into trooping figures that astonish the lay man who honestly thinks that a day's work is worth only a day's feed, the villages can never be prosperous. For huge salaries mean heavy taxation.

There shall be a Supreme Court which shall decide all inter-district, inter-provincial and inter-state disputes that may be referred to it. It shall also hear appeals from the High Courts on pure questions of law of general constitutional interest or public importance.

There shall be no second chamber or Senate either in the Provinces or in the Federal Government. There is no need in India, where colossal conservative forces in politics and religion reign supreme, for a revising second chamber to check hasty legislation. India can never

move too quickly. Its immense population and splendid variety are by themselves the **greatest** checks on hasty legislation. A second chamber in India will ruin tragically the speeding glory, the quickening joy and the great impulses of the Renaissance. A revising chamber will become in India only a rendezvous of all reactionary and selfish elements. Our greatest need is to move quickly, and build our national life before the creative renascent urge is over. A second chamber even with limited powers will retard Indian progress by three centuries.

On the other hand, instead of a revising chamber, there is considerable utility in devising a preparatory house, both for the Provinces and for the Central Government. Our problems are so many, our political life is yet so young, our interests are so varied and conflicting, that a preliminary house for real debate and discussion, of sincere enquiry into high, national policies will prove a great source of constructive strength to the Federal and Provincial Governments. It will clarify the issues, and serve as a guiding light to the real legislators. If it functions well, its moral force would be tremendous. It would be the finest nursery for statesmen and real humanitarian workers.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A NEW ORDER

India can never work successfully any model of Swaraj Government till she is able to produce on a much larger scale a new *sanyasin* order of men in the ranks of our public life, whose hearts as well as their robes are golden. In fact, not merely India but the whole world needs such a selfless order of men to carry out faithfully the higher message and the truer and the more enduring benefits of government.

For political institutions to function healthily and serve as the true hand-maid to evolution, the motives of political life, as I have said so often, should suffer a grand sea-change. A new order of men should enter public life. From energetic selfishness which is now the rule and the qualification, we should pass on quickly to active selflessness as the supreme quality of political action and the true virtue of public life.

° To create this atmosphere and help bringing in the new order of men, the first step is to throw open the membership of all deliberative

bodies from the Village Council to the Assembly only to those men who combine a high degree of culture, gentility and character with non-ownership of property, a new sanyasin order of men wholly devoted to politics and public life like the Servants of India Society at Poona. Such members of councils shall be entitled to a decent subsistence allowance. They are best rewarded for their valuable services to the nation by the affectionate regard of their countrymen.

Another salutary rule, which would ensure the purity of public life, is that no servant of the Government of India from the lowest village watchman to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth shall acquire property in any form anywhere during or after his term of office without the consent or sanction of the Village Council in whose jurisdiction he lives or of the Public Service Commission which has recruited him.

In consonance with the above rules for the public servants, all exploiting trades and professions shall be given the least scope for callous adventure or reckless money-making. Their excessive profits shall be excessively taxed. Then there will be social justice in our public life, and the huge machinery of modern government will function evenly benefiting all. Then only you can create an atmosphere richly laden



with universal contentment where the dividing mark between public and personal interest vanishes, and the joy of work is for its own beautiful sake unconcerned with its fruits.

These rules may seem much opposed to the ordinary run of practice and the sense of possession so native to human life. But human life is only a rest-house in the long way of evolution, and the sense of possession itself is undergoing a slow but sure sublimation, a change into a higher quality. And if you are a true pilgrim you will think of the march for the morrow rather than of the day's joys of the rest-house.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A PROGRAMME OF RURAL RECONSTRUCTION.

1. An effective and a representative *Panchayat* or a Village Council on the lines indicated earlier shall be immediately established with full powers of control over the affairs of the village.

2. All facilities for the promotion of scientific agriculture shall be given.

3. The Village Council shall run a co-operative store of agricultural implements and seeds and also of general merchandise suitable to rural needs. The exports and imports, the commercial life of the village, shall be guided by the Village Council.

4. It shall employ a doctor who shall be responsible for the health and sanitary condition of the village. He shall render free medical aid from out of the village funds, to the poor who now die, like flies, of cholera and other water-born diseases. It shall also employ a mid-wife. •

5. The *Panchayat* shall run a school and a theatre of its own for the people and arrange

for periodical lectures on subjects of rural, provincial, national and inter-national interest. A good library and a reading room shall be attached to the school. It shall strive to introduce electric power for lighting, home and agricultural work.

6. The tanks and the channels in the village shall be maintained in proper condition. Irrigation works of a minor character but of vast common good shall be explored and executed. Every field even of the poorest shall have the benefit of a clear source of irrigation and an outlet for drainage of its own. The absence of this essential minor facility in many cases reduces by half the fruits of hard labour in the fields. It is also the cause of undue friction between adjacent holders leading to bitter faction.

7. Fouling of the streets, tanks, streams and ponds shall be made an offence punishable with fine or imprisonment. Now the pollution of the sacred rivers and common tanks is indescribable, at any rate in South India. This vicious habit is of very recent origin and it has increased ten-fold in a decade. I vividly remember my High School days at Mayavaram where none however powerful was allowed to cleanse even his teeth in the sacred Cauvery. Now the fouling of the majestic river and the beautiful banks under the ever-lasting shade of giant trees is

terrible. This folly of our men otherwise virtuous in hundred ways is largely due to a primitive and pathetic ignorance. The old religious sanctions indirectly based on sanitation have miserably failed under the impact of an alien civilisation with a new cult of freedom, and the modern scientific ideas of sanitation have not yet taken their place.

8. The *Panchayat* shall do its best to beautify the village and keep it clean and healthy. It shall strive to rear public gardens wherever possible on waste lands, and plant avenue trees on river-banks and roads.

Five years of strenuous work on these lines with love and devotion will totally change the face of Mother India and make her the happiest among the nations. But to effect this magic change her educated men must give up the present pitiable slavery to fruitless clerical work and begin once again the royal worship of the plough, like our forefathers. The chief glory of our civilisation is in its lovely dependence on the natural pleasure and the sweet contentment which Mother Earth offers to her sons.

Any measure of Swaraj or Dominion status we may get will never improve our real status if provision be not made therein for the complete autonomy of our villages which are now leading but broken lives. We must set again our villages on solid foundations.

Our rural rejuvenation will never be achieved without allowing the fiscal liberty to every village to retain a decent proportion of its *kist* or government revenue for its own primary local needs and improvements. On this vital issue rests the peace and happiness of ninety per cent. of the population.

May India produce a leader who has the vision to see this and the gift of practical statesmanship to render the vision into an ever-lasting deed of public good to the dumb three hundred millions who live in the village and depend on Agriculture, even supposing that the other twenty millions manage to get on by the witchcraft of pen, ink and paper, and the black magic of a liberal profession!

## CHAPTER XV.

### BANK THE WATERS

A full tide of Renaissance in human affairs spreading at the same time over the whole world touching everyone to fine endeavour is a very rare phenomenon. Since the emergence of man there has been only one such Renaissance on a complete scale, nearly twenty-five centuries ago. It was in the fifth century B.C. beginning with Buddha and Confucius, and producing in quick succession, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in the West and Asoka in the East. These great sons of the First Renaissance of man laid the foundations of our civilisation. All our subsequent refinements are mere mural decorations. We have achieved all these years only lateral expansion. Vertical growth is a more difficult thing in Nature and requires a deeper base. Only another Renaissance, as rich and complete as the old, can give us the strength to build better and nobler.

The higher causes of such a Renaissance are to us as mysterious as the twinkling glory of stellar motion in the void of space or the deep stir of waters that swell into tidal waves.

The birth of a Renaissance obeys a law far beyond our knowing, responds to a rhythm of cosmic dance that is far above our comprehension. If at all, we often know it like lightning after it has shot through the sky in one lambent flame of light, leaving us wistfully more in darkness. But to the careful and vigilant farmer every cloud is a messenger of hope, whether it be only a truant cloud dancing its sterile way across the blue, or the great Monsoon itself. The seasoned farmer waits with his fields manured and seeds ready, and profits both from a drizzle and a cloud-burst.

India has not always given a good account of God's great gifts to her especially of the many renascent movements, minor and major, in her history. Asoka born to a great tradition no doubt fulfilled himself in many ways marking the end of a great epoch. He added considerably to our invaluable heritage of a pacific temper and outlook on life. He gave his high best to the Time-Spirit and received gladly as much from it. But his work was not continued on the same lines.

Asoka to Sankara was the next spring of the Renaissance. Sankara found national life in the narrow ruts of a weird, ritualistic exuberance and mind-stagnation. He boldly stirred it with the sublime churn of intellect and reason. He took Thought to unscaled heights of philo-

sophy, and the individual to undreamt refinement and knowledge. But his philosophy floated like flakes of cream in milk, without wholly becoming a living tradition shaping the daily habits and outlook of the people. It was no doubt a splendid conquest of the empire of the mind for all time and for all men. But his unified vision of life never succeeded in welding India into one homogeneous whole in practice as it should have if only for the validity and penetrative power of his lofty conception of the Oneness of all Life. Perhaps the very short earthly career of Sankara was responsible for the failure to transmute a soaring idealism into the accomplished realities of daily life. The Time-Spirit was favourable but the precocious creative personality was cut short in the tender prime of manhood at thirty-two. And the scheme of succession he wisely ordained proved inadequate to the ~~colossal~~ nature of the work involved. The size and fertile variations of India are the chief causes which make our problems more complicated than even those of the modern "United States of Europe," which stand now divided into more than a dozen nations with bitter cross-sections of interest in hundred ways.

Then the leap is from Sankara to Akbar. Really Akbar begins the trials in modern Renaissance where the leavening comes from a de-



finite foreign impact. Akbar strove for a higher unity of India which perhaps Dara would have accomplished had he a less astute and ambitious younger brother. Akbar was really great but the Time-Spirit was unripe and it was due to his forceful personality that even so much was attempted in the right direction.

Shivaji is really a continuation of Akbar. But the renascent impulse got scattered to the winds. For, the Time-Spirit was again unfavourable. And the potter had not the lease of life to knead the dry clay with exquisite labour, and dump it fine on the wheel forcing it to take the shape which the wheeling hand wills. Shivaji was short-lived, cut away just at the time when the real work was beginning. His successors, the Peshwas missed the higher spirit of Shivaji and side-tracked themselves for the mere glory of military adventure, the most unhappy kind of fame for a Brahmin. And they too were a very brilliant but short-lived race who missed the higher purpose of the century.

Owing to the continuous stream of immigration with its own ever-fresh contacts of culture, India has had a larger number of renascent movements. If the renascent floods have left behind a richer soil for better gardening the next year they have also considerably added to the measure of the initial spade work. But the

results have been on the whole not up to the promise. For, the leaven proved too thin to leaven the whole bread.

The root cause of the failure is in ourselves. India always moves sluggishly to action, a little too late, when the plastic and creative force has ebbed and the metal has cooled. Renascent energy the moment it is released, always seeks to escape in the air. The generous impulse should be immediately disciplined and brought under national service and grooved into habits of action, into an active and living tradition that regulates even the minutiae of daily life. A song is never a song till it is actually rendered into a noble deed. A ferment is a waste of valuable, refined, human power if it does not lead to a lasting change for the better in social and moral conditions. No victory is real till its gains are common to all, for all time.

None the less our achievement in the measure of our knowledge and ideals is significant. India is rich in simplicity and contentment, plain-living, philosophy and leisure, a theory of life full of ethical values, and a permanent code of social conduct. Her pacific temper is the finest asset. For, it is the nursery of all the higher virtues of evolution: gentility, humility and love. It is our best contribution to the race. Peace is the mother of *ahimsa* which gives to

life the precious touch of love and sacredness. We have put these virtues in the hiding places of our backyard, even as a miser buries his ancient gold under rubbish mounds. Let us now mint our qualities into lovely coins of service both for our own use and for the whole world. The rich acres in the beautiful valleys are our own but, alas, they lie fallow. Bring them under the plough and make them feel the divine joy of the seed. All ideals have their fulfilment in action, daily emerging in work and resting in sleep. From the highest to the lowest, everyone of the three hundred and twenty millions of India should have a high philosophy not as an untouched inheritance but as a record of noble and selfless work that arises from working it out in everyday life.

Surely I hear the murmurs of a great Renaissance now coming all over the world after an interval of twenty-five centuries. We are now in its first stages. Its full and mature energy will very soon be upon us, raging like rain-winds in the garden. Will we, now at least, profit by our failures in the past or blindly repeat the cycle of waste and misery? Let us remember that man is not a mere vegetable. It is in his own hands to make and mar himself in the winding track of evolution. Let us not run to waste a grand occasion for human uplift so rare in the long march of the race.

Kind reader, pray with me that He may vouchsafe unto us the discipline, the energy and wisdom to bank the streaming, life-giving, life-renewing waters into a reservoir of strength against the waste of the sea, when the renascent winds bring the monsoon-clouds, and with them the tranquillity of plenty and the creative joy of love and peace for the whole of the human race.



## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

	RS. A.
1. <b>Paper Boats.</b> (Sketches of Indian Village Life) Third Edition .. ..	1 0
2. <b>On the Sand-Dune.</b> (Musings on Life in Free Verse) Second Edition (Revised & Enlarged) ..	1 0
3. <b>Murugan, The Tiller.</b> (a Novel of Indian Rural Life, Pp. 336.) Second Edition .. ..	2 0
4. <b>The Next Bung.</b> (A Constructive Study of Modern Civilisation) .. ..	1 8
5. <b>A Day with Sambhu.</b> (Talks to a child) ..	0 8
6. <b>Renascent India.</b> (A Study of Indian Problems), Second Edition (Revised & Enlarged) ..	1 0

### OPINIONS.

1. An Indian who writes with rare charm and sympathy about his own people.—J. A. SPENDER in *The Changing East*.

2. One of the foremost writers of India; an Indian thinker—*Public Opinion*.

3. As a writer of short sketches and essays, Mr. K. S. Venkataramani has achieved no small reputation. Prominent British writers have commended his work, so respected an authority as Mr. Frederic Harrison remarking that "the English style is graceful and correct," while Mr. William Archer found in the author's sketches "much grace and sincerity of feeling."—*Madras Mail*.

4. Steadily advancing to the front rank of his generation is Mr. Venkataramani. We first knew this author from "Paper Boats," a fine performance which earned him just praise for his command of that almost lost art, the Essay.—*The Daily Herald*.

5. Mr. Venkataramani is a man of refinement of sentiment, of lofty ideals, and immensely sincere. He is an artist with his *genre*, the interpretation of his own people.—*The New Pearson's, New York*.

6. Mr. Venkataramani writes a sensitive, idiomatic English and the sympathy and intimate understanding with which he interprets his people should make the reading of his book a liberal education for Englishmen.—*The Bookman*.

7. The success he has achieved in English authorship is indeed remarkable.—*The Cape Times*.

8. The writer is a complete master of English simple, dainty, with a sense of humour steeped in the sweetness of affection, running through the living descriptions.—*Dr. Annie Besant* writes in the *Foreword to 'Paper Boats'*.

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**Svetaranya Ashrama, Mylapore, Madras**

## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

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### OPINIONS ON "MURUGAN, THE TILLER."

1. *Lord Haldane* : A little time ago you were so kind as to send me through His Holiness Shri Sankaracharya Swamigal, a copy of your book, *Murugan, The Tiller*. I have now read your volume carefully through. I have been much impressed by the art which you have displayed in the story, and the way in which you have made village life in India live for the reader. The picture has value for the student of native institutions. I have read your story, and have gained not only pleasure but knowledge.

2. *Romain Rolland* : I thank you for the volumes that you have been pleased to send me, particularly the last, *Murugan, The Tiller*. I have experienced considerable pleasure in evoking (in my mind the picture of) rustic life which has been half heaven and half dream but a dream which should be the guide and the light of reality. I congratulate you sincerely.

3. *Lawrence Binyon* : Thank you so much for *Murugan*. It is very difficult for us to have a vivid, intimate picture of Indian life in our minds ; and your story gives me that. There is much beauty in the picture, as well as things which make one think and be sorry. The divorce of human life from Mother Earth is surely a great cause of modern unhappiness, both in East and West. Our balance is upset. But I do not lose hope for the world.

4. *J. A. Spender* : You bring back to me most delightfully the atmosphere of India and give me a sense of Indian life and character which I could not get from any English writer. I hope you will go on, for you have it in your power greatly to help English readers to understand India.

5. *R. B. Cunningham-Graham* : Many thanks for the beautiful little idyll of Madrassi life. I know nothing of Indian life but I can see at once that yours is a true picture of it from the inside.

6. *Lord Meston* : I am full of admiration of your steady endeavours to familiarize the British public with the domestic intimacies of Indian life.

7. *Jean Buhot* : I was truly delighted to receive your new novel. I like it immensely. There is in it a gentle, tender, refined feeling which appeals to me very much, something that is very Indian and is, or was Latin as well.

8. Clear reasoning and obvious sincerity ; beautifully chosen phrases, often poetic but never over-sentimental. The delineation of

## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

character is masterly. "Murugan" is distinctly a book to read and to think about, whether on holiday or in the study.—*The Review of Reviews*.

9. He brings out with all the simplicity and charm of his earlier work the best sides of Hindu family life.—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

10. The thought is gentle and profound. "Murugan" is more useful than many more pretentious tomes, and very readable.—*The Foreign Affairs*.

11. I missed the fast train and the best tribute to the book is that I did not find the journey long, though we stopped at every station. Mr. Venkataramani's genius for observation is illustrated in this book.—A. FENNER BROCKWAY in *The New Leader*.

12. Mr. Venkataramani's descriptions of rural life, the river scenes and the life of college students are all vivid.—*The Cape Times*.

13. Ramu, a very lovable character. He represents the highest form of natural religion. His extraordinary power due to sheer benevolence is well brought out.—*The Egyptian Gazette*.

14. The same intimacy and the graphic talent for description make "Murugan" valuable to the student of India. It is a well-told story.—R. M. BLOCH in *The Birmingham Weekly Post*.

15. Zola in "Fecondite" did not preach with greater earnestness the doctrine of the love of Earth, the "Mother of All." But the difference between the French and the Indian mind is at once apparent. To Zola's Forment, the Earth brings wealth; to Mr. Venkataramani's Ramachandran she offers only contentment.—J. C. MOLONY, I.C.S., in *The Asiatic Review*.

16. The conception of the story and the agrarian project which reconciles all to the simple life are rather fine and noble. Something curiously attractive about the tale.—*The Irish Statesman*.

17. Broad views and a singularly agreeable literary style. The book throws a wonderful light on various problems in India.—*The Sussex Daily News*.

18. In "Murugan The Tiller," the author has given us a novel of Indian life in South India to-day which possesses distinction, grace and that rarer quality, fidelity to every-day life.—*The Madras Mail*.

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## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

19. The author of "Paper Boats" and "On the Sand-Dune," those sensitive transcriptions of Indian life and thought, here gives us his first novel. Beautiful picture of idealistic peace painted with evident sincerity.—*The Times of India*.

20. A fascinating and faithful portraiture of social life to-day : the magic of his art steals upon us. The sense of humour as enlivening as it is natural, plays gracefully over the whole book.—PROF. K. SUNDARARAMAN in *The Hindu*.

21. A charming story. The author has imagination. The language is simple and charming and the book will amply repay reading.—*The Statesman*.

22. There is a subtle fascination about his river-side scenes. He has quite an original, interpretative way of expression and there are passages in his story which are full of beauty.—*The Indian National Herald*.

23. Idealism is writ large on every page. Language of rare delicacy and sweetness, deliciously outlined by an artist who knows how to write tender and wholesome English.—*The Rangoon Times*.

24. The story, on the whole, is very powerful; it is brilliant. He possesses an eye for telling incidents, the capacity for manipulating a complex plot, an ability to individualise characters, and a mastery over language which serves him equally well in dialogue (the scenes on the Alavanti river are unforgettable), description and reflection.—*The Modern Review*.

25. For delicate humour and graphic description of women, the river scenes stand unexcelled in the story. All the charms of village gossip, unaffected and innocent, are irresistibly felt.—KRISHNA KUMARI in *The Forward*.

26. Feliculously written incorrect and graceful English. Realistic and charming.—*The Pioneer*.

27. By far one of the few beautiful English novels written by an Indian. Every graduate should make a point of reading the novel.—*The Mahratta*.

28. Brings to the knowledge of the West a highly valuable philosophy of life. It supplies a most valuable insight into the Hindu mind and social point of view. Language both apt and colorful. The price is very low for a book of such a great value. Another beautiful quotation will give you an inkling of the wonderful philosophy that this book contains.—*Llano Colonist, U.S.A.*

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## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

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### OPINIONS ON "PAPER BOATS."

1. *Frederic Harrison*: I am much interested in your *Paper Boats* and shall show it to qualified readers with my good word. The English style is graceful and correct and the intimate life of the Indian Village is told with such familiar and sympathetic feeling that it must have the effect of a charming novelty to us in Europe. We are all deeply concerned with the future of India and your book will help to show us how strong is the contrast between the historic spirit of Indian civilization and the present form of our Industrial progress and modern democracy.
2. *William Archer*: Thank you for your *Paper Boats* which I have read with interest and pleasure. I find in your sketches much grace and sincerity of feeling.
3. *Mr. E. V. Lucas*: I have read your *Paper Boats* with very much pleasure. They tell more of India than shelves of more pompous works and they deserve, both for themselves and just now a propaganda to be widely known.
4. *Prof. Gilbert Murray*: Many thanks for the gift of your little book *Paper Boats*. It is very interesting to read an intimate and artistically written account of Indian village life.
5. *Sir W. Robertson Nicoll*: I send you my cordial thanks for your book *Paper Boats*. I have read it with much interest. It is written in excellent English and in an admirable spirit. I think I like best the article on the Grandmother. But they are all good.
6. *Mr. J. C. Squire*: Many thanks for your kind letter. I have already looked at the book and am most interested in it. I hope I may be able to write something about it.
7. *Lord Haldane*: Thank you for your gift of your book *Paper Boats*. It is refreshing to us in the unimaginative West, to read your pictures, so suggestive of village life in India.
8. *Lord Northcliffe*: Very many thanks for your charming little book, *Paper Boats*. I have read "Village Cricket," "My Grandmother" and the "Fishermen" with much delight.
9. *Prof. George Saintsbury*: *Paper Boats* is a most pleasant little book and I am much obliged to you for sending it to me.

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## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

10. *Lord Meston*: Your courteous and most welcome gift of *Paper Boats*. It is a most delightful navy on a halcyon sea and in all my wanderings I never enjoyed a trip more heartily. I love your delicate, little sketches. . . . I admire their gracious fidelity to Hindu life. My warmest congratulations on a difficult and perfectly accomplished literary feat.

11. *Maurice Hewlett*: Your *Paper Boats* are charming, both for what they say and the manner of saying. You have caught the idiosyncrasy of my language, so far as I can judge, perfectly.

12. *A. C. Benson*: I have read it with interest and sympathy and I have found the stories vivid and touching.

13. They are drawn with a loving intimacy. He has presented them in a peculiar atmosphere of his own. . . . A corner of the veil which is always down is lifted and we catch a glimpse of the real household life. "*Paper Boats*" is a book wherewith to beguile an hour over the fire.—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

14. A vivid, very attractive picture of life in an Indian Village. The book has atmosphere. Some of the studies of rural life are very charming.—*The Bookman*.

15. Hindu Village life in the prose of Addison.—*The Daily Herald*.

16. Rare charm and delicate insight and written in quaintly felicitous English. . . . Floating on their native waters they have absorbed the delicate odours of jasmine and lotus.—*The New Pearson's, New York*.

17. It will give the English reader a better insight into the Hindu mind and a better appreciation of the Indian social point of view than half a dozen of the many weighty treatises by the Pundits. Mr. Venkataramani's sketches are very real and very human.—*The Review of Reviews*.

18. The first seven lines of this book tell the reader that he is in the presence of "Literature." The rest of the book confirms it. Mr. Venkataramani touches humanity with the compassion of blood relationship. A writer of unimpeachable English, and a translator of the essence of Modern Indian Life, at its source, the village.—*To-morrow*.

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## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

### OPINIONS ON "ON THE SAND-DUNE."

1. *A. C. Benson* : I find your ideas both retrospective and introspective expressed with much poetical feeling and charm.

2. *H. F. Ward* : I was of course greatly impressed by your beautiful treatment of the theme.

3. *E. V. Lucas* : It is of a more personal and spiritual nature than *Paper Boats*.

4. Mr. Venkataramani muses addressing to his listener, a series of philosophical reflections, each one of which is distinguished by peculiarly musical, poetical prose.—*The Daily Herald*.

5. Mr. Venkataramani's "Paper Boats" (reviewed in these columns on March 9, last), attracted considerable attention on its appearance for the distinctive native atmosphere with which he had managed to envelop his slight sketches of Hindu Life. The same atmosphere is felt in this new book.—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

6. His snatches of reflection, and aphorism and small word pictures in poetic prose pleased me greatly.—*The Birmingham Weekly Post*.

7. "Modern life, its miseries and uncertainties."—*The New York Times*.

8. A very accomplished writer of English, "On the Sand-Dune" is a series of reflections on life, which in their hatred of industrialism as well as in the beauty of the style, recall Ruskin.—*The Glasgow Bulletin*.

9. To appreciate it properly one has to read it leisurely from cover to cover and to drink slowly the exquisite melody of the words as they form themselves into passionate appeals for what Carlyle calls the eternal verities of life.—THE HON. MR. JUSTICE C. V. KUMARASWAMI SASTRY in *The Indian Review*.

10. Suffused with a mystic glow these charming song-reveries plaintively appeal for a return to simplicity, to peaceful contemplation and joy of homely, simple life.—*The Hindustan Review*.

11. It is scarcely possible to bring out fully the delicate fragrance of this charming brochure. With its fine chiselled English, its pathos, its inimitable touches of life and its gentle irony . . . real literature . . . to read it is to love it.—*The New Empire*.

12. "On the Sand-Dune" is a very touching prose poem, there is such a deal of pathetic beauty in it.—*The Hindu*.

13. The little book is itself a first fruit of that Renaissance which Mr. Venkataramani feels is approaching.—*The Madras Mail*.

14. The burden of his song, which is in poetic prose, is that we should strive for a better harmony of cultures and civilisations in this land of ours. What aim can be nobler and what ideal more uplifting.—*The Janmabhumi*.

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## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

### OPINIONS ON "THE NEXT RUNG" AND "RENASCENT INDIA."

1. *Rabindranath Tagore* : I have a very genuine appreciation your originality of thought and felicity of expression.
2. *Mr. Upton Sinclair* : I have read your little book "The Next Rung" with great interest and I congratulate you upon your telligent and clear-sighted point of view. I am very glad to know there are such writers in far-off India.
3. *Sir Arthur Keith* : One has only to open your book find you have dived deeply into the affairs of men and conditions human life. I shall study what you have written.
4. Brilliance and much insight ; a complete revaluation, a bold provocative of much thought—*The Theosophist*.
5. An Indian idealist : rare charm and delicate insight : clear reasoning and obvious sincerity :—*The Aberdeen Press and Journal*.
6. Undoubtedly thought-provoking.—*The Egyptian Gazette*.
7. Breathes of the mystician which is peculiarly Indian.—*The New Leader*.
8. An addition to the wisdom of the world. Charming style and ideas mostly original.—*The Leader*.
9. Deserves a large circulation for its literary merits.—*The Hindustan Review*.
10. Searching and critical, warm-hearted and touched almost with the gift of prophecy ; Mosaic of words and phrases perfect in design and outline.—*The Scholar*.
11. If there is one fascinating Indian writer in English it is first and foremost, Mr. K. S. Venkataramani. Clear thought and beautiful language.—*Vaitrani*.
12. Provocative of various thoughts about the future of India. The benefits to be derived from this excellent book are indeed enormous.—*The Mahratta*.
13. Remarkable book. His thought provoking essays are a substantial contribution to the Indian Renaissance that is to be and we congratulate him on the admirable presentation.—*Rural India*.

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## BOOKS BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI.

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### OPINIONS ON "A DAY WITH SAMBHU."

1. *R. B. Cunningham-Graham* : It embodies your healthy, pure and rational philosophy.
2. *E. V. Lucas* writes : Your little book has much beauty.
3. A picture of an ideal day in the life of a school boy in tones that will make a general appeal. There is so much wisdom contained in brief phrase. This is one of the very best and is the most simple, the most direct and the most pleasant we have read for many a day.—*The Madras Mail*.
4. Delightful booklet, a pure joy to read ; much wise and lofty advice in exquisite prose, a delicious contribution to Anglo-Indian Literature ; so quiet, gentle and Christ-like that we modern "Christians" are put to shame by the ethical sublimity of it all.—*The Rangoon Times*.
5. Simple yet delicate style ; this dainty booklet is a joy to the young.—*The Hindu*.
6. Usual lucidity of exposition and felicity of diction.—*The Swarajya*.
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